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Objectionable Team Nicknames: Determining The Likelihood Of
Selling The Issue Of Banning Them In Virginia High Schools

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the Underdogs who are striving so hard to be Mighty Dogs, and the many dedicated educators who give of themselves so unselfishly to educate and mentor our children.

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This project was not created in a vacuum. It has taken the expertise, creativity, time, effort, feedback, support, and love of a number of people to bring this project to completion. To all of you, I am most grateful.

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIONABLE TEAM NICKNAMES: DETERMINING THE LIKELIHOOD OF
SELLING THE ISSUE OF BANNING THEM IN VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOLS

By Pamela Lynn Taylor, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011

Major Director: Dr. Blue Wooldridge, Professor, Department
of Political Science and Public Administration

This study explored the personal and situational factors that contribute to a high school principal's willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames to their school division administration for the purposes of banning them. Based on the literature review, nine hypotheses were developed regarding the factors that influence the issue-selling process in a centralized, hierarchical organization. The issue selling model utilized in this study suggested that organizational support, top management openness, organizational norms, probability of success, and image risk would be determinants of willingness to sell the issue (Mullen, 2005).

This study utilized a mixed-method research design. Personal interviews were conducted with retired and current

high school principals that had dealt with the objectionable team nickname during their careers. In addition, questionnaires were electronically sent to 311 current public high school principals.

Ordinary least squares regression identified perceived probability of success and image risk to be the factors that have the most statistical impact on a high school principal's willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname to their superior. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine the likelihood that an emotional issue would be brought forth. The study provides recommendations concerning issue selling in a public school system.

Key words: issue selling; school principal; team nicknames; American Indian team nicknames; sexist team nicknames; southern heritage team nicknames; satanic team nicknames

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

School division administrators are increasingly finding themselves involved with divisive local debate and costly legal suits concerning the use of school team nicknames that many may find objectionable or offensive. Objectionable team nicknames are an issue when discussing tolerance and multiculturalism in our society (Hirschfelder, 1989; Pewewardy, 1991; Davis, 1993; Smith, 1997; Eitzen, 1999; Wren, 1999; Ward, 2004).

These emotional debates can create animosity and tension within a community and will only increase as more organizations, such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) make public and formal policy decisions against the use of team nicknames that can be viewed as controversial, offensive, or objectionable. It is only a matter of time before this level of debate and divisiveness reaches the high school level as well.

The symbolic use of nicknames representing athletic teams and students participating in extracurricular activities has been a practice in America since 1718 with the adoption of the nickname *Eli* at Yale University in New

Haven, Connecticut (Franks, 1982). Many colleges and universities select team nicknames that signify their heritage, history, or founder (Franks, 1982; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001); that are a reflection of the school's values and mission (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Ward, 2004); or that define the institution's characteristics, attributes, and school spirit (Fuller & Manning, 1987).

There are team nicknames utilized in Virginia public high schools that may be considered objectionable because they "dismiss, differentiate, demean, and trivialize marginalized groups such as American Indians (for the use of American Indian imagery), African-Americans (for the use of Southern heritage or Confederate imagery), and women (for the use of sexist terms)" (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001, p.49). Religious symbols, while not addressed in the team nickname literature, will be included due to the numerous articles cited (Latane, 1997; O'Neill, 1997; Iacoboni, 2003) in the popular press concerning the use of objectionable Satanic team nicknames and mascots in local communities.

It is estimated that more than 2,500 elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools had Native American mascots at the end of the 20th century (Staurowsky, 1999; Clarkson, 2003) and more than 80 institutions of higher education (Rodriguez, 1998). Clarkson (2003) devised a database designed to track the use of American Indian

nicknames across the country utilizing a web crawler. It was determined 10.6 percent of all high schools across the country use Native American nicknames and mascots, with the names Indians and Warriors being the most popular. The American Indian Sports Team Mascots (AISTM) organization has determined that Virginia is in the top 25 percent of all states with the most schools using Native American imagery as either a mascot or team nickname (www.aistm.org).

In the Commonwealth of Virginia it was determined from a manual review of the 2008-2009 Virginia High School League (VHSL) directory that 69, or 22.2 percent of the public high schools in Virginia that use team nicknames, can be considered objectionable (www.vhsl.org). Table 1 shows objectionable team nicknames by type and percent of usage.

Table 1. Objectionable Team Nicknames Used
in Virginia Public High Schools

Type	Number	Percent
Sexist	29	9.3
American Indian	20	6.5
Satanic	11	3.5
Confederate	9	2.9
Total	69	22.2

Figure 1 is a map of Virginia that illustrates the use of objectionable team nicknames can be found in all areas of the Commonwealth, from rural towns to large metropolitan cities, with the locations of each of the high schools that are currently using an objectionable team nickname.

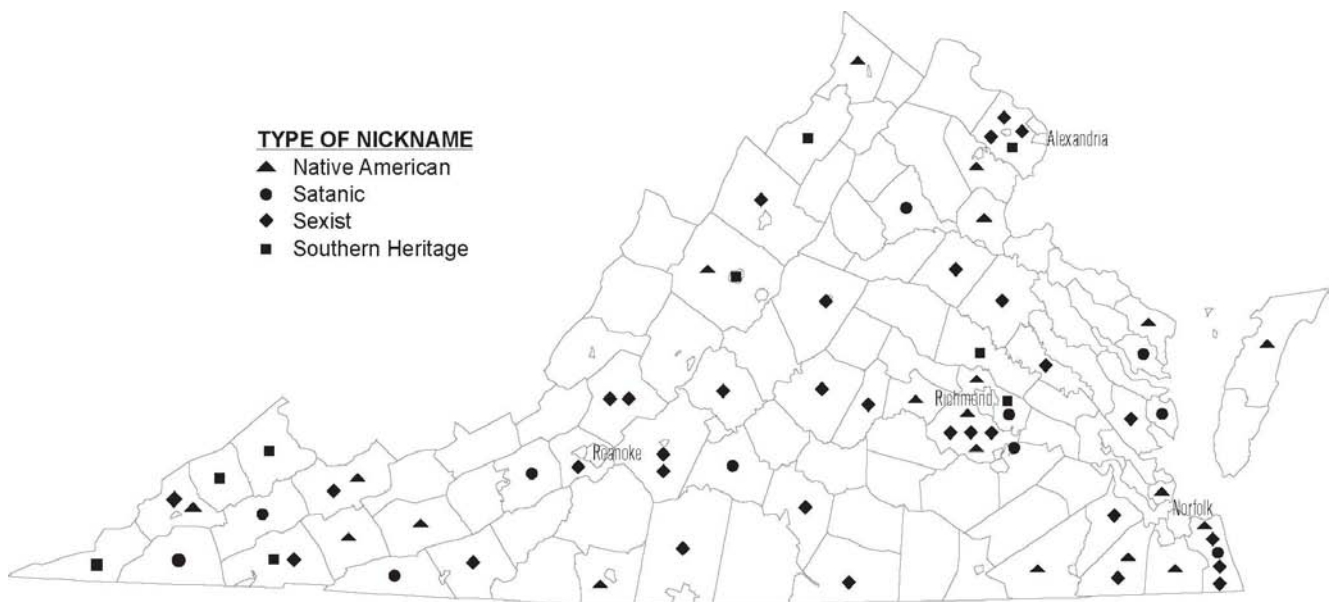


Figure 1. Locations of Public High Schools Using Objectionable Team Nicknames in Virginia

School team nicknames may be used to unite students in school spirit and loyalty, but research suggests that school nicknames also have the power to divide (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Eitzen, 1999; Pewewardy, 1999, 2000, 2004; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Black, 2002; Ward, 2004). Eitzen (1999) argues that as people become "more sensitized to racism, sexism,

and other exclusionary practices" (p.33), it is not acceptable to continue using team nicknames as symbols that groups of people may find objectionable.

School division administrators need to address the issue of objectionable team nicknames currently in use. If it has not already occurred in their school division, someone is going to comment, voice their opinion, become upset, or possibly sue concerning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in the public school system. In a system that is undergoing severe budget constraints, the avoidance of litigation is critical.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to build on existing research and to understand under what conditions are public high school principals more or less willing to bring or "sell" the issue of objectionable team nicknames in schools to the attention of their school division administration for the purpose of having them banned. This study will focus on how situational and personal factors will simultaneously contribute to the willingness or not to initiate the process of issue selling. Aiken & Hage (1971) and Pierce & Delbecq (1977) suggest a high degree of external control, high levels of bureaucratic control, and centralization which are prevalent in a school system, will inhibit or even prevent

issue selling from occurring. The process of issue selling in public organizations is important to understand since it is the first step that must occur if change and innovation of current organizational practices are to take place (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991).

Research Questions

This study was designed to test an issue-selling model and to answer the following questions:

- 1) Under what conditions will high school principals "sell" the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration?
- 2) Is the issue of selling the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools perceived differently between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not?

Significance

Public high schools are the vehicles where groups of students come together and where educators are finding it more difficult to successfully educate children in a culturally diverse environment (Pewewardy, 2004). The objectionable depiction of a team mascot or nickname can

only seem to create an environment of hostility and hatred (Pewewardy, 1999, 2000, 2004).

As public institutions, schools have the legal, moral, ethical, and fiduciary responsibility to address the needs of all students and to provide an environment or culture that is conducive to learning (Pewewardy, 1999; Fiore, 2001). This study will help school administrators gain an understanding about which situational factors make a high school principal more or less willing to initiate the issue selling process. The issue selling process is where individuals bring ideas and concerns together in order to focus others' attention and actions on an important issue (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998). The idea is to bring an issue to the forefront before it becomes an emotional or legal problem since problems are usually more difficult and costly to deal with than are issues.

From a practical perspective, this study will contribute to issue selling research by understanding the situational factors that may contribute to employee silence or the lack of willingness to initiate the issue selling process when confronted with an emotionally charged issue. The understanding of the factors involved in "selling" the banning of objectionable team nickname issue in the public school system to school division administrations will ultimately provide a clearer understanding of the barriers

related to organizational change. A school system is constantly changing; therefore, understanding the barriers to change is particularly relevant.

Team Nickname Type as an Issue

The review of the literature concerning the controversy of objectionable team nicknames in educational institutions revealed three types of nicknames that have connotations that can be considered offensive or objectionable. The three types of team nicknames discussed in this study are Native or American Indian; Southern heritage or Confederate; and sexist. Satanic nicknames, while not covered specifically in the literature, have received significant coverage in the popular press and warrant inclusion as well.

American Indian

The use of American Indian imagery for sports mascots received public attention as an issue with the founding of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis, Minnesota during the late 1960s (Johansen, 2003). For over four decades there has been a movement by activists in the United States to ban American Indian team nicknames, mascots, logos, and images from professional, collegiate, and public school sports (Hirschfelder, 1989; Pewewardy, 1991; Davis, 1993, 2002; Jackson, 1997; Mihelich, 2001; Staurowsky &

Wilson, 2001; Black, 2002; King, 2002, 2004; Springwood, 2004).

The controversy is due in part to American Indian activists arguing that the faces, images, and symbols of their culture are being portrayed negatively. This negative portrayal leads to the stereotyping and misunderstanding of the true ethnic heritage of American Indians that includes a history of violence and social injustice (Pewewardy, 1991, 1999, 2000, 2004; Banks, Davis, Slowikowski, & Wenner, 1993; Slowikowski, 1993; Staurowsky & Wilson, 2001; Black, 2002; Davis, 2002; King, 2002, 2004; Banks, 2003; Baca, 2004).

Chiefs, Fighting Braves, Indians, and Warriors are examples of American Indian nicknames or imagery being used in Virginia public high schools.

Southern Heritage

The Rebel flag has had two distinct meanings for decades (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). One school of thought is the Rebel flag is a historical symbol that promotes the South's heritage (Leib, 2004). The other is it symbolizes slavery, separation, hate, and discrimination (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Leib, 2002).

Symbols come from the history of the people they represent and for whom they hold meaning (Durkheim, 1995).

Because of the interpretation of the meaning of the symbols to different groups, the symbols of the Confederacy may be in contrast to present day groups' understandings and interpretations (Forts, 2002).

Confederates, Fighting Leemen, Generals, Rebels, and Rebel Pride are examples of Southern heritage or Confederate nicknames with negative connotations being used in Virginia public high schools.

Sexist

The use of team nicknames for athletic teams is not a gender-neutral process which leads to the stereotyping of superiority and inferiority as gender issues (Eitzen, 1999). The increased participation of women in sports has led many educational institutions to choose to feminize their school nicknames for their female athletic teams, many of which project attributes of maleness. The feminization of team nicknames has "contributed to the trivialization of women's sports and reflects the second class status of women as it is perceived by American society" (Fuller & Manning, 1987, p. 63).

Barons, Black Knights, Cavaliers, Dukes, G-Men, Knights, Minutemen, Stallions, and Statesmen are examples of sexist nicknames utilized in Virginia public high schools.

Satanic

Satanism is the worship of Satan as an honored being and a religion that condones violence, hatred, and revenge (Clark, 1994). The increase of youth involvement in cults, satanism, gangs, and skinhead groups has parents and educators concerned and fearful (Zeddies, 2000).

Blue Devils, Demons, Devils, Red Devils, and Sun Devils are examples of satanic team nicknames utilized in Virginia public high schools.

Theoretical Foundation

The review of the literature reveals that a school principal's willingness to identify and "sell" the issue of objectionable team nicknames currently being used in high schools to their division administration is similar to Dutton & Ashford's (1993, p. 23) concept of issue selling. Dutton & Ashford define issue selling as "being a voluntary, discretionary set of behaviors by which organizational members attempt to influence the organizational agenda by getting those above them to pay attention to issues of particular importance to them".

Issue sellers often feel uncomfortable in bringing an issue to the attention of their superiors (Ashford, 1986). An unfavorable issue can affect the seller's image and

credibility negatively within the organization if it is deemed unimportant or trivial. But a favorable issue that is brought to management's attention at the right time has the potential of helping a person's career by positively impacting their image and credibility (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998).

Meyerson & Scully (1995) argued there is an "intrapsychic wrestling" that influences a seller's willingness or not to bring attention to an issue. They have also stated this wrestling will "govern whether managers will offer ideas, concerns, and input to those above them or remain silent". In diverse and evolving organizations, this input is invaluable (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). The first step for change in organizations is to identify and sell the issue, objectionable or not.

The issue selling literature has focused on middle managers' attempts to get the attention of supervisors and top managers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993) and has identified a set of factors that affect individuals' willingness to sell issues. These factors include situational variables such as perceived organizational support, perceived top management openness, and perceived organizational norms (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998). These factors mediate the variables of an individual's image risk and probability

of success to determine an individual's willingness to sell an issue (Mullen, 2005).

Organizational support measures an employee's perceptions concerning the extent to which the organization values the employees' contributions and well being (Ling, Floyd, & Baldrige, 2005). Top management openness assesses the perceived attitudes and mind set of top management by an employee to determine if they are willing to sell an issue. The employee needs to trust their supervisor is "open" to suggestions (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Organizational norms assesses the pressure exerted on an individual to sell or not sell a controversial issue and that behavior is viewed as normal and legitimate in the organization (Mullen, 2005).

Perceived probability of success is defined by the amount of exertion an employee is willing to invest in selling the issue (Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence, & Miner-Rubino, 2002). Image risk is the perception of how an employee feels the issue has the potential to damage their credibility in the organization (Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence, & Miner-Rubino, 2002).

For this research, top management is defined as school division administration. In Virginia, school division administration is the direct supervisor of school principals or to whom the school principal reports. They are the individuals responsible for hiring as well as performing

performance evaluations for all professional personnel in their district (Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006).

The literature on issue selling has paid little attention to public organizations that are highly centralized and bureaucracy heavy (Monahan, 2005). There is a need to address the power and resistance issue sellers must encounter in such organizational contexts (Howard-Grenville, 2007).

Methodology

The research questions for this study were investigated using a mixed-methods design. This is a distinct research design that incorporates qualitative and quantitative methods in combination to offset the weaknesses of each approach and improve internal and external validity (Scandura & Williams, 2000; Creswell, 2003). The mixed-methods design for this study is exploratory in nature and incorporated a qualitative phase of personal interviews, and a quantitative phase utilizing an electronic survey, in a sequential format.

The mixed-methods design was selected for this study for two reasons. First, a mixed-methods design was chosen in order to have the ability to refine the questionnaire and generate rich data from the interviews, but still have the ability to check for generalization that survey data

provides (Giddings & Grant, 2006; Hohenthal, 2006). Second, examination and analysis of the data from two different data collection methods can uncover insights that may have gone undiscovered (Andrew, Salamonson, & Halcomb (2008).

Qualitative Approach

The purpose of using a qualitative approach in the research design was to have the ability to study the complexity of the objectionable team nickname issue with people who have dealt with it in the "real world" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Since there is very little research available concerning the team nickname issue at the high school level, it was decided a qualitative approach would help define and guide the survey questionnaire as well as provide the rich details about this issue that a survey can not (Leedy, 1997).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with high school principals, retired and current, that have dealt with the objectionable team nickname issue. A purposeful sample was generated by conducting an electronic search of newspaper articles in the Lexis-Nexis Academic database. The interview guide used was a collaborative effort between the researcher and the committee's qualitative methodologist. The interviews were structured to last between twenty and thirty minutes.

Quantitative Approach

The purpose of using the quantitative approach in the research design was to have the ability to explore the possible correlations among the variables in an issue selling model. The quantitative approach also allowed for the ability to generalize from the sample population to a larger population (Leedy, 1997).

A questionnaire was administered to all current public high school principals in Virginia. Due to the small size of the population, the survey was provided to all members and was not a random sample survey. The list of potential survey participants was provided by the Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP). VASSP is an organization founded in 1906 committed to the improvement of secondary education in the Commonwealth of Virginia (www.vassp.org).

Population

High school principals are selected because they are the "top managers" in their respective schools (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) and because upward-influence theory suggests they are the ones with their fingers on the pulse of their individual schools and more knowledgeable about issues needing to be addressed (Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

Principals are also the "middle managers" in respect to the Virginia educational administrative hierarchy.

Past studies by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton (1998) investigating gender-equity issues, and Mullen (2005) investigating workplace safety issues, using an issue selling model have utilized middle managers as their study populations. It is important to understand the process and dynamics that would enable school principals to "sell" an issue of importance upward in an organization that is known for being top down regarding communications and feedback.

Data Collection

There were two methods of data collection utilized for this project. First, a semi-structured interview was conducted face-to-face with willing participants in order to collect data for the qualitative approach. An interview guide was used so the researcher would not lose focus and ensure all relevant questions were asked. After a list of names for potential respondents was generated, a determined effort was made to try to locate each of those individuals. Of the potential respondents that could be located, a telephone inquiry was made requesting their participation in this study.

After agreeing to be interviewed, an appointment was arranged to meet each respondent in person at their

convenience and at a location of their choosing. Each respondent was informed of the following information: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the anticipated length of the interview, (c) that the interviews would be digitally recorded, and (d) that their names and schools would be kept confidential. The qualitative phase of the data collection process started after approval was received from the Institutional Review Board and continued for one month during August-September 2010.

Second, the quantitative phase of the data collection process started after the interview period ended and was conducted using a five-phase process as outlined by Dillman (2000). This included a pre-survey letter, the actual survey link, and subsequent follow-up communication. These phases were conducted over a three-week period during September-October 2010.

A forty three item questionnaire was designed to measure the situational factors of individual's perceptions of organizational support, top-management openness, organizational norms, probability of success, image risk, and demographic information. The questionnaire was administered electronically by a web-based surveying company, Survey Monkey. Data was recorded using both ordinal and nominal scales with most responses based on a five-point Likert scale.

A pilot test is necessary to help field any unforeseen issues and react to them proactively before the survey is administered to the population sample (Leedy, 1997). The survey instrument was pilot tested using ten full-time faculty members at a private liberal arts university. Each of the faculty members teaches at least one research design methods course per year at the graduate level and most had backgrounds in some facet of public education. The pilot test was used to ensure both face and content validity. The pilot test lasted for one week and each faculty member provided detailed feedback concerning the survey questions, the ordering of the survey questions, and the means of administering it. Feedback from the pilot test was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis is conducted utilizing content analysis. Berg (2007, p. 304) defines content analysis as the "careful, detailed, and systematic examination and interpretation of data in order to identify themes and patterns." Notes and digital recordings from the interviews were reviewed immediately after the interview while the information was still fresh in the mind of the researcher. The digital recordings were then transcribed. Memoing was also employed as a means of determining if a

pattern was emerging from each of the interviews and to allow the researcher to record any reflective notes (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Inductive data analysis was conducted so categories and themes could emerge from the data. The data was coded in order to identify segments, topics, and categories that emerged from the interviews.

The quantitative data analysis includes descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics utilize correlation analysis to describe the degree of relationship between the variables in the theoretical issue selling model. Social identification with the objectionable team nickname issue, extent of the team nickname issue within the participant's own school, and perceived importance of the team nickname issue are used as control variables to ensure the covariation reported is not due to nonspurious relations (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

Limitations

This research study has limitations. The population to be studied is small and will constitute one state with its own unique population demographics. This study is exploratory and will provide valuable information for the Commonwealth of Virginia; however, there may be limited

opportunity to generalize to other states that have a more diverse ethnic population who also attend public high schools (Krathwohl, 1985; Leedy, 1997).

The cross-sectional survey design utilized in this study is the most predominant design used in social science research (Frankfort-Nachimas & Nachimas, 1996). The cross-sectional survey is designed to collect data at one point in time from a smaller sample population to describe and suggest relationships in a larger population at that time (Babbie, 1990). The nature of the cross-sectional survey design will not be able to capture the essence of a survey participant that has not yet determined if any, or if even some team nicknames are objectionable or not.

The decision to sell an issue to one's superior is complex with numerous influences. This study is focused on a limited number of variables to suggest the factors that may result in a principal's willingness or not to "sell" an emotional and controversial issue. There may be additional influences and factors that may offer a more complete explanation but have yet to be identified in the literature (Frankfort-Nachimas & Nachimas, 1996).

The issue being studied in this project is objectionable team nicknames utilized in public high schools. In particular nicknames with American Indian, Confederate or Southern heritage, sexist, and Satanic

connotations will be examined. It is beyond the scope of this study to identify every term, object, or value used in selecting a team nickname that can be considered offensive or objectionable.

Definitions

American Indian-refers to descendents of the first inhabitants of the American continents. This label is used in this project for descriptive purposes only. While this term puts all tribes into one category, it is acknowledged each tribe is sovereign and there are many cultural and language differences between them (Yellow Bird, 1999).

ASA-American Sociological Association was founded in 1905 and is a non-profit membership organization that promotes sociology as a scientific discipline and a profession that serves the good of the public.

Baron-a British nobleman of the lowest rank.

Cavalier-a gallant or chivalrous man.

Confederate-a supporter of the Confederate States of America.

Confederate nickname-team nickname that refers to Southern heritage or the Civil War.

Demon-an evil supernatural being or a devil.

Devil-the major personified spirit of evil in many religions, also known as the ruler of Hell and a foe of God.

Duke-a nobleman with the highest grade of peerage in many European countries.

Effort-an earnest attempt.

Energy-the exertion of vigor or power.

Friar-a male member of a religious order.

Gamecock-a type of rooster bred for cockfighting.

High school principal-an educational leader and chief executive of a high school; job responsibilities include maintaining effective relationships with students, staff, parents, and community organizations; to interpret and implement state requirements and district policies and regulations; is hired by and accountable to the local school board.

Image risk-is the perception a principal has that their reputation and credibility could possibly be tarnished in the organization by selling an issue that could be considered controversial to their school division administration.

Issue-will use Dutton & Dukerich's (1991) definition for the purpose of this study, defined as "an event, development, or trend that organizational members may recognize as having an affect on or consequence to the organization".

Issue selling-will use Dutton and Ashford's (1993) definition for the purpose of this study, defined as "calling the organization's attention to key trends, developments, and events that have implications for organizational performance".

Knight-a medieval tenant giving military service as a mounted man-at-arms to a feudal landholder.

Lancer-a cavalryman armed with a lance.

Magick-a practice or ritual that utilizes spells and incantations to change outcomes of events in Satanic worship.

Minuteman-an armed man pledged to be ready to fight on a minute's notice during the Revolutionary War.

NAACP-National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded in 1909 and is a national civil rights organization for ethnic minorities.

Native Americans-Indigenous peoples of the North and South American continents also known as American Indians, Indigenous, First Nations, Amerindians, or First Peoples.

Native American or American Indian nickname-team nickname with a Native or American Indian connotation; is used interchangeably in this project based on language found in the process of examining the literature.

NCAA-National Collegiate Athletic Association was formed in 1906 and utilizes a voluntary board of colleges and universities that govern athletic competition and integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education.

NFHS-National Federation of State High School Associations was formed in 1920 and establishes consistent standards and rules for competition and for those individuals that are responsible for overseeing high school sports and activities.

Non-objectionable team nickname-for the purpose of this study will be defined as any team nickname not defined as objectionable.

Objectionable team name-a team nickname that can be considered unacceptable, undesirable, or offensive to a group of people; for the purpose of this study will include those nicknames with an American Indian, Confederate or Southern heritage, sexist, or Satanic connotation or derivative.

Perceived norms-measures the pressure exerted on the principal to either sell or not sell a controversial issue and that pressure is perceived as normal in the organizational culture.

Perceived organizational support-measures employee perceptions concerning the extent to which the organization values the employees' contributions and well-being.

Probability of success-is the confidence a school principal has on whether they can sell an issue to the school division administration or not.

Public high school-a secondary school supported by public funds and providing free education for children of a community or district, the instructional level is grades 8-12, 9-12, or 10-12 depending on the particular division.

Ram-an adult male sheep.

Rebel-a term used by Northerners to describe the Confederate soldiers during the Civil War.

School division administration-is defined as the person to whom the high school principal reports to directly. This phrase encompasses all titles that may be utilized in each division to define a direct supervisor. Each school division has a unique administrative hierarchy and job title based on population and geographic size.

Sexist nickname-team nickname with a gendered connotation that is most likely masculine.

Stallion-an adult male horse that is usually used for breeding purposes.

Statesman-a man who is a leader in national or international affairs.

Team logo-is a two-dimensional image of an illustrated team nickname.

Team mascot-a three-dimensional interpretation of the team nickname, is usually a person, animal, or object used to bring good luck.

Team nickname-a literary symbolic identification of a team or school in the form of a word.

Time-a period designated or available for a given activity.

Top-management openness-measures the attitudes and mindset of a principal's school division administration to determine if the supervisor is open to new ideas and suggestions from a person lower in the division hierarchy.

VASSP-Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals founded in 1906 and incorporated in 1974 as a professional organization of principals and assistant principals that promotes statewide advocacy and improving secondary education.

VHSL-Virginia High School League was founded in 1913 and incorporated in 1981 to establish and maintain standards for student activities and competitions that promote education,

personal growth, and sportsmanship for the youth in Virginia public high schools.

Organization of the Study

This research followed a traditional format and is organized into five chapters. Chapter one outlines an introduction to the researching of objectionable team nicknames as an issue within Virginia public high schools. This chapter includes the background of the study, its significance, theoretical foundation for investigation, the research questions to be answered, and the methodology utilized for the study.

Chapter two provides an extensive and detailed review of relevant literature as it relates to the upward influence practice of issue selling and the use of objectionable team nicknames in public educational institutions. Testable hypotheses are developed based on previous research and empirical studies in relation to high school principals "selling" the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration.

Chapter three describes the research methodology for this project in greater detail. This section includes a discussion of the mixed-methods research design, instruments, measures, and the data analysis and statistical procedures used.

Chapter four presents the results of the collected data and an analysis of that data. The results of the statistical analysis will allow the hypothesized relationships to be either accepted or rejected. The inductive analysis of the qualitative data will allow for a greater understanding of the objectionable team nickname issue.

Chapter five concludes the study with a summary of the research findings and the presentations of the conclusions from this project. This section also includes suggestions for future inquiry and implications for public policy and public administration.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research study that included the background of the objectionable team nickname issue and the research questions to be answered. The next chapter will discuss the relevant literature and link the variables and hypothesis to the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to provide an overview of the existing literature related to this dissertation and to provide a theoretical foundation in guiding the research to answer the questions: (1) Under what conditions will high school principals "sell" the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration and (2) Is the issue of selling the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools perceived differently between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not? This review includes a discussion of issue selling theory and objectionable team nickname research. The chapter also provides operational concepts to support the hypotheses.

Issue Selling

Issue Selling Defined

Dutton & Ashford (1993) define issue selling as "a voluntary set of behaviors in which organizational members

attempt to influence those above them by calling attention to key trends, developments, and events that has implications for the organization" (p. 23). The types of issues that are sold can vary based on what an individual feels is important either personally or for the benefit of the organization. Issues are usually broad in nature and are not as clearly defined as problems since they can be either threats or opportunities (Ansoff, 1980); unstructured (Lyles & Mitroff, 1980); and have no definitive way to articulate them to others (Lyles, 1987). Issue sellers often grapple with issues that are complicated, do not have a solution, and are subjective as to their importance on the organizational agenda (Dutton & Ashford, 1993).

The individual-level upward influence behaviors of issue selling differ from similar upward influence behaviors such as whistle blowing, voice, and organizational dissent. Whistle blowing involves bringing illegal activity or wrong doing to the attention of those higher up in the organization (Near & Miceli, 1987). Voice is an opportunity to express dissatisfaction with the organization (Withey & Cooper, 1989). Organizational dissent involves speaking out about violations concerning injustice or dishonesty (Graham, 1986). Issue selling does not imply that something illegal has taken place, there is low employee morale or job

dissatisfaction, or that an injustice has occurred (Dutton & Ashford, 1993).

Issue selling implies a broader sense of motivation based on the issue seller making choices to come forward with their issue based on the belief that it appropriately belongs on the organization's agenda (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). An individual may raise an issue because it is important for either an organizational or personal opportunity. Dutton & Duncan (1987) suggested that top management has a broader scope of what is happening in their organizations by listening to the issues brought forward by those in middle management.

Theoretical Background

The management of organizations must cope with a great deal of complexity as they make important decisions about the future. They face change, uncertainty, and unknown events (Greve & Taylor, 2000). Managerial time and attention are scarce resources and managers must determine which issues receive attention and which do not (Pfeffer, 1994). Mintzberg (1978) argued that top management or the "upper echelon", (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), suffer from too much information. In response, it is human nature to be selective in the information received and processed (Sharfman, Pinkston, & Sigerstad, 2000). An administrator's ability to

make strategic decisions for the organization is a complex process that involves factors that can be either internal or external to the organization (Ansoff, 1980).

Open systems theory states that an organization is an open system that interacts with its environment in order to maintain a long-term existence and assumes individuals and their organizations cannot operate in a vacuum (Lynham, Chermack & Noggle, 2004). An open systems theory suggests that a school division can be impacted by issues external to the organization. For example, the NCAA's 2005 decision to ban the use of objectionable American Indian mascots and team nicknames at the college and university level and its subsequent backlash by many college alumni, can be assumed to indirectly impact public school divisions as well.

The concept of personnel other than top management bringing forth issues of significance to the organization began with strategic planning (Ansoff, 1980). It became important for researchers to examine how issues were raised in order to determine how to respond to internal and external pressures (Schilit & Paine, 1987). From this initiative, Lyles (1987) argued individuals will gather information and persuade others to support their view. Lyles' research identified the need to study the role of an individual in an organization in influencing top management to consider issues that were important to that individual.

The role of influencing top management has been examined theoretically and empirically by many organizational researchers (Kanter, 1977; Mintzberg, 1978; Schilit, 1987; Schilit & Paine, 1987). For example, Schilit (1987) examined the types of strategic decisions in which middle managers are likely to use upward influence, the types of tactics they used, and the predictors of success and failure used in those tactics. Mintzberg (1978) identified that members of an organization are often instrumental in bringing issues to the forefront of an organization's strategic agenda.

When managers and administrators engage in a discussion concerning issues and challenges facing an organization and the future, many times some voices are heard above others, leaving some voices unheard (Hazen, 1993). The organization that will listen to only select voices will limit itself to the amount and type of information received as well as for discovering alternative ways of dealing with issues and conflict. It is important for administrators to understand the control factors that are in place that lead to the silence exhibited in some members' voices in the organization or the reason they are unwilling to bring an issue to the table for discussion.

One reason organizational members may remain silent is due to what Rosen & Tesser (1970) and Milliken, Morrison, &

Hewlin (2003) have termed the 'mum effect'. Research on the mum effect has shown that individuals have a reluctance to share negative or controversial information with their superiors because of discomfort (Conlee & Tesser, 1973) or fear of negative consequences (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). The right issue that is brought to management's attention at the right time has the potential of helping a person's career. However, an unfavorable issue has the potential of labeling the issue seller a 'radical' or 'troublemaker' (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin (2003, p.1455) have shown "that subordinates distort the information that they convey to their superiors, communicating upward in a way that minimizes negative information".

The hierarchical relationship between subordinate and supervisor appears to intensify the mum effect. Festinger (1954) observed the structure of hierarchies in organizations automatically restricts communications between lower-status members and those in supervisory positions. It would appear employees are more likely to "filter" information that is conveyed upward when they have aspirations of a promotion and when there is little or no trust with their supervisor (Read, 1962; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). Argyris & Schon(1978) noted there are powerful norms within the organizational culture and hierarchy that often

prevent employees from bringing forth issues they find relevant to the organization's overall strategic goals and mission. Sprague & Rudd (1988) noted that many organizations have a low tolerance for any type of criticism and the raising of issues.

Researchers have investigated the factors that might make people more willing to communicate upward and to "sell" issues to higher management for over two decades (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). For example, Saunders, Sheppard, Knight, & Roth (1992) found that an employee's willingness to voice work-related concerns to their supervisors depended on how approachable, how much support they could expect, and how responsive they perceived their superiors to be. This finding is consistent with Glauser's (1984) study, which suggested that upward communication is affected by the organizational culture and the relationship between subordinate and supervisor (Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003).

Managers and administrators in organizations are receiving pressure from external as well as internal stakeholders for an accountability of all decisions made within their respective organizations (Blockson, 2003). In response, many educational institutions have had to come to terms with social and political issues. Rittel & Webber (1973) defined social and political issues as "wicked"

because they are "ill defined and rely upon elusive political judgment for resolution" (p.160). The characteristics of social and political issues can change over time and are interpreted by individuals that are influenced by their own values and experiences (Kingdon, 1995; Blockson, 2003). Johnson & Greening (1999) argued the sooner an organization responds to the early warning signals in their environments, the organization can determine if it is being faced with a potential opportunity or threat and respond with an appropriate action. The potential is greater for an organization to influence a signal or issue the sooner it is identified.

The process of bringing a particular issue to the attention of others, or issue selling, is the first step of change within an organization (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, & Lawrence, 2001). Issue selling takes place early in the decision-making process and is a voluntary action by an individual (Crant, 2000). The behavior is voluntary because it tends not to be controlled by management, but by the individual's own decision to raise or sell an issue (Mullen, 2005). An issue-selling perspective and framework is appropriate for this research project because it brings to light the "often-unnoticed acts of change agents, below or outside organizations' top management groups, who invite

consideration of some issues and not others" (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neil, & Lawrence, 2001, p.716).

The stream of issue-selling research has focused on middle managers' attempts to get the attention of supervisors and top managers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993) and has identified a set of social and organizational factors that affect individuals' willingness to sell issues. Those factors include organizational support, top management openness, and organizational norms (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998). Those factors in turn mediate the variables of probability of success and image risk to affect individuals' willingness to sell an issue.

Issue sellers often feel stress about whether or not to sell issues to their superiors because of the inherent personal risks associated with involvement (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Ling, Floyd & Baldrige, 2005). Selling the 'right' issue at the 'right' time and in the 'right' way can lead to personal benefits but selling a controversial issue can lead to negative consequences and damage the seller's personal reputation or image (Dutton & Ashford, 1993).

Mullen (2005) investigated employee safety issues in the workplace and determined that an individual's willingness to sell an issue is impacted by the probability

of successfully selling that issue based on whether their opinion would be well received and not be too costly personally. Those employee expectations are consistent with expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), if issue selling can be expected to lead to a positive conclusion or minimize the negative consequences, an individual will be more likely to sell an issue to a superior that is important to them.

Each issue is different and the personal judgment utilized for each situation changes (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). The use of individual and situational factors in the study of workplace attitudes and behaviors as having predictive validity is supported by the work of Graham, 1986; Withey & Cooper, 1989; Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Morrison & Phelps, 1999. Although the use of individual and situational variables to study employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace has been validated; it can be considered controversial.

The question concerns the ability of individual characteristics to explain variance in workplace attitudes and behaviors. One side of the debate questions the true value of individual factors in explaining variance in workplace attitudes and behaviors (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989) while House, Shane, & Herold (1996) defend the use of these factors. The controversy has resulted in research designed to address the validity of dispositional variables

(Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997; Steele & Rentsch, 1997), which has supported the practice of examining both individual and situational factors in the study of workplace attitudes and behaviors. The use of individual and situational variables has been used extensively in previous research on issue selling to predict and explain specific employee behaviors (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Ling, Floyd, & Baldrige, 2005; Howard-Grenville, 2007).

The issue selling literature has not addressed the issue sellers' situated experience (Howard-Grenville, 2007). The theory of situated experience "requires coordination and activities with others within the organization and requires negotiation through interactions" (Bond-Robinson & Stucky, 2005), such as decisions and activities that occur within a public school division. Even fewer studies have addressed the power and resistance issue sellers must encounter in organizational contexts (Howard-Grenville, 2007). There is the need to study how the situated experience of individuals in centralized, top-down decision-making organizations may affect individuals' willingness to sell an issue within the type of organizational structure and culture that is found in the public school system.

Research on whistle blowing is consistent with the suggestion there are real and perceived risks associated

with calling attention to sensitive or controversial issues (Near & Miceli, 1987; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba, 1997; Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). It would stand to reason that if a school principal expects little or no negative consequences from their school division administration, they would be more willing to sell the idea of banning objectionable team nicknames being used in high schools.

Issue Selling Model

The issue selling model developed by Dutton & Ashford (1993) and Mullen (2005) proposes to examine the effect of three independent situational variables (perceived organizational support, top management openness, perceived organizational norms) and two mediating variables (perceived probability of success and image risk) on the dependent variable of willingness to sell an issue. These variables are expected to be important in predicting a principal's willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue because of their relevance in understanding issue selling in the workplace (Ling, Floyd, & Baldridge, 2005; Howard-Grenville, 2007). Figure 2 is the issue selling model being used to illustrate the hypotheses to be tested in this research and their theorized positive or negative direction.

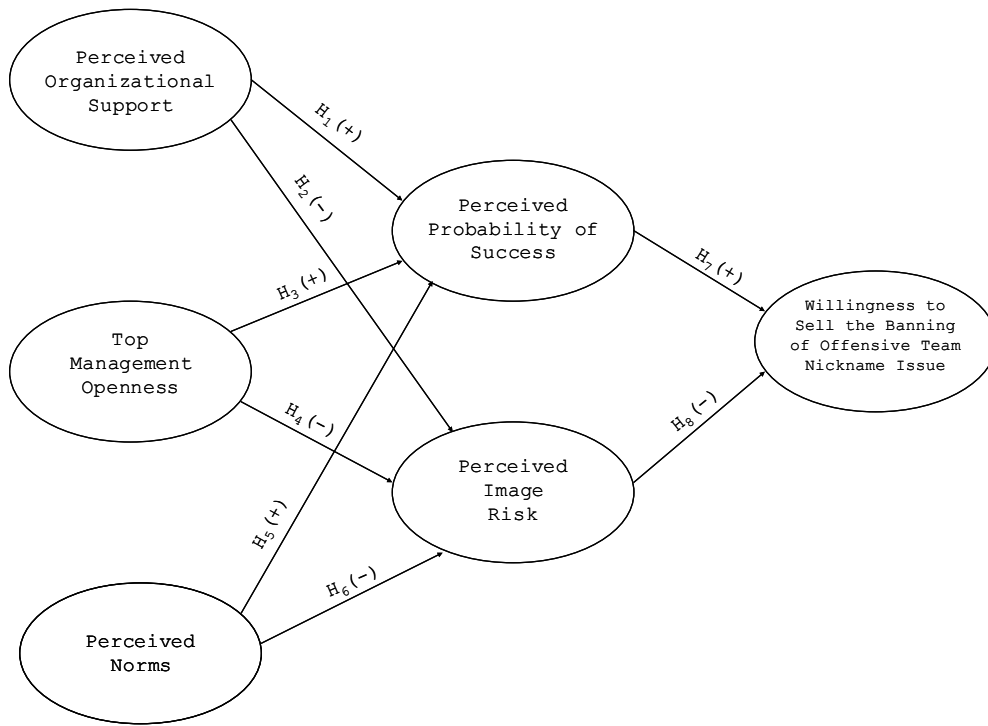


Figure 2. Issue Selling Model
Source: Mullen (2005)

Variables and Supporting Hypotheses

Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support for issue selling is the extent to which the organization will value employees' issue-selling behavior (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba, 1997; Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill & Lawrence, 2001). Festinger (1954) observed that structured hierarchies in organizations

could inhibit communications between lower-level members and those in supervisory positions. When there is perceived support from the organization, a psychological safety net exists, and this may create an atmosphere conducive for issue selling (Ling, Floyd, & Baldrige, 2005).

Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba (1997) argued that individuals examine contextual clues to determine how superiors may perceive an issue-selling activity. If employees perceive a high probability of success and a favorable context, or no negative repercussions, they are more likely to raise issues that they believe will be listened to and treated seriously by supervisors. Favorable contexts within an organization are defined as "a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values employees' general contributions and cares for their well-being" (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; p.50). Research on perceived organizational support suggests that an environment with favorable organizational support can lead employees to raise issues such as safety concerns in the workplace (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). This was an employee-led action that had the potential to bring an important issue to the forefront of management attention.

The support for perceived organizational support as a variable to predict willingness to sell an issue is further supported by the relationship between perceived

organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. Research has shown that employees feel a reciprocal need to alert the organization when an issue has the potential to undermine the mission and objectives of the organization. For example, Hofmann, Morgeson, & Gerrass (2003) found employee willingness to focus on improving the safety in the organization and bring to the attention of management a number of safety issues that would deter from the mission of safety in the organization.

Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton (1998) suggested that when perceived organizational support is high, individuals would perceive less image risk associated with selling an issue. With this favorable context, employees believe that their attempts to raise the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames will be perceived positively and there is little or no risk to their image. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Perceived organizational support is positively associated with a school principal's perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived organizational support is negatively associated with a school principal's perceived risk to their image.

Top management openness

Top management openness describes the degree in which upper-level managers demonstrate openness to ideas or suggestions from those lower in the organizational hierarchy

(Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997). When employees at the lower levels of the organization perceive supervisors at a higher level are open to new ideas and suggestions, theory suggests that the employees are more willing to sell their ideas, concerns, or issues (Ling, Floyd, & Baldrige, 2005). The perception that someone above them is willing to listen lends itself to a favorable context.

Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton (1998) argued that if employees believe that top management will react positively to their attempts to sell an issue, the employees will perceive a greater chance of successfully selling their issue. This argument is supported by the work of Morrison & Phelps (1999) that found top-management openness to be positively related to taking charge and by Scott & Bruce (1994), that found top-management openness to be positively related to employee innovation. In their qualitative study of middle managers, Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba (1997) found that top managers' willingness to listen was one of the most noted contributors to context favorability and managers' intention to sell issues.

When the relationship is perceived as trusting, it contributes to a sense of security. This will strengthen a potential issue-seller's belief that selling attempts will receive consideration, which in turn will promote the

intention to sell an issue or concern (Ling, Floyd, & Baldridge, 2005). The issue-selling literature suggests, "the perceived attitudes and mindset of top management as the recipients of issue-selling attempts shape when and what issues will be sold by middle managers" (Dutton & Ashford, 1993, p.404). Dutton & Ashford (1993) also suggest that employees may perceive issue-selling as being less threatening and having a higher probability of success if top management is perceived as being open and supportive. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: Perceived top management openness is positively associated with school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived top management openness is negatively associated with perceived image risk.

Perceived organizational norms

Organizational norms are the "shared standards of behavior that emerge within a group" (Morrison & Phelps, 1999, p. 406). When organizational norms suggest a certain behavior is expected, then employees of that organization will determine the appropriateness of going against the grain of those norms. Based on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), organizational norms play an important role in an individual's decision to sell an issue to top management because that individual will attach either

a positive or negative meaning to meeting others' expectations.

Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998) suggest organizational norms provide employees with a standard in which they can measure what is appropriate or not within the organization. For example, they found that norms supporting gender issue selling were negatively associated with perceived image risk. This finding suggests that if raising issues in the organization is the norm, it will reduce an employee's concern about their image risk with co-workers and supervisors.

Based on their findings, it is assumed that work place norms geared toward change will motivate employees to undertake issue-selling behavior. These assumptions are consistent with the work of Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba (1997) that had found employees determined violating organizational norms posed the greatest potential for personal image risk. When an employee's workplace tends to create conditions of norms that favor openness, an employee will perceive their opinions and feedback are wanted and their willingness to share those opinions will increase. In an environment where openness is not the norm, an employee will perceive a negative reaction from selling an issue and will be less likely to do so. Thus,

Hypothesis 5: Perceived organizational norms are positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

Hypothesis 6: Perceived organizational norms are negatively associated with the school principals' perceived image risk.

The next two variables, probability of success and image risk, are considered mediating variables. Mediating variables are used for "refining and understanding a relationship" (Wu & Zumbo, 2008, p.367). The theory is the mediating variables explain how the physical events happening in organizational support, top management openness, and organizational norms "take on the internal psychological significance" of probability of success and image risk (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p. 1176). The mediating variables are used as third variables that will link the independent variables with the dependent variable.

Probability of success

The literature suggests that an individual's perceived probability of success at selling an issue will be related to willingness to raise an issue of importance (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). This is consistent with expectancy theory that suggests the importance of an issue is in part determined by the probability of obtaining a desired outcome

(Vroom, 1964). Dutton & Ashford (1993) drew upon motivational theory and suggested that an individual's perceptions about whether or not they can successfully sell an issue will impact their decision to initiate the issue-selling process. Thus,

Hypothesis 7: School principals' perceptions of the probability of success are positively associated with their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

Image risk

The fear of damaging one's desired image within the organization may play a role in determining whether an individual is willing to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames with superiors. Individuals may be concerned with how they will be viewed by others in their organization if they were to raise a controversial issue (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba, 1997) and are less likely to raise an issue that will result in damaging others' impressions of them (Ashford & Northcraft, 1986).

A positive image as seen by others helps in determining employees' willingness to sell an issue. The loss of friendships and acceptance from co-workers and supervisors suggests an employee is less willing to raise an issue. For example, Mullen's (2005) study on safety issues at work reported individuals were less willing to raise a safety

issue if it meant the loss of acceptance and friendship.

Thus,

Hypothesis 8: School principals' perceptions of image risk are negatively related to their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

Willingness to sell

The dependent variable is willingness to sell an issue. The variable is a discretionary and voluntary behavior in which high school principals attempt to get those above them to pay attention to the issue of objectionable team nicknames being used in public high schools for purposes of banning them.

Demographic variables

Demographic information about the study participants includes gender, age, racial/ethnic background, religious affiliation, current professional status, tenure at current school, and tenure in the current school division.

Role of the High School Principal

The role of the school principal has changed in focus since the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation implemented during the Bush administration in 2002 (Björk & Blasé, 2009). The NCLB legislation set high standards and measurable goals for increased accountability in schools.

The current emphasis on reform and assessment has changed the role of the principal from one of manager and task master to one of leadership and transformation. The increased measures and accountability have left education vulnerable to internal as well as external forces (Björk & Blasé, 2009).

Ball (1987) has described a school as "an arena of struggle", an organization where conflict is expected and approaches to that struggle offers insight into how power and influence are used to resolve or avoid conflict when dealing with controversial issues. The school principal is the one individual in the school primarily responsible for "defining the school's vision and articulating the ideological stance" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) since the principal is "the voice, the mouthpiece of the institution and it is his job to communicate with various constituencies" (p. 323).

Principals are the "middle managers" in respect to the administrative hierarchy in the Virginia public education system. The principal is in the senior position within their school and they can be seen as the middle manager within the wider organizational structure of each school division (Goddard, 2004). The principal "sets the boundaries between the school and community, and must

negotiate with the supervisor and the school board” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 323). The resulting observation according to Llamas & Serrat (2002) is “principals have a bridging role between educational imperatives, market forces, political hegemony, and managerial complexity” (p. 304).

The leadership role of school principals is evolving and has been found to directly impact the culture, climate, and environment of the school and, in turn, student achievement (Norton, 2002). The principal, as a leader, has the responsibility and duty to act in the best interests of his or her students (Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber, 2006). The Supervisor of the Virginia Department of Education describes the principal as “the single most important person in a school” (Supervisor’s Annual Report, 2006). The Virginia Standards of Accreditation state the principal is responsible for “instructional leadership and effective school management that promotes positive student outcomes, including achievement of individual students” (Code of Virginia, 2007).

The process and dynamics that would enable school principals to “sell” an issue of importance upward in an organization that is known for being top down regarding communications and feedback is important to understand. The

perceptions of the school principal in this study are important because they are the individuals to whom others turn to for support when confronted with what Banks (2003, p.2) has called "the deepening ethnic texture of contemporary schools".

Blasé & Blasé (2000) have argued the political process is a critical aspect of many school cultures and norms and organizational support can be considered "central" for decisions and outcomes related to school change and reform. Their work has shown evidence of organizational norms in school systems that prefer to maintain the status quo while others are more open to change and reform.

However, policy implementation implies politics and often times those politics are beyond the scope of the role of the school principal. "Politics" refers to decisions about the dispersal of goods and resources, and the when and how that dispersal will occur (Laswell, 1990). The political process in education involves conflict as well as cooperation. The conflict and cooperation of the political process in education often includes individual and group interests as well as power, influence, and values (Björk & Blasé, 2009).

Schools and school divisions are complex organizations that present demands on a principal's time and attention

(Goldring, Huff, May, & Camburn, 2008). The role of the school principal has become more complex as society is ever changing and principals must have their "fingers on the pulse" of the culture around them. The principal has the ability to lead his or her school to a greater understanding of diversity and promote social justice (Hoff, Yoder, & Hoff, 2006). According to Dantley & Tillman (2006), discussions about social justice in the education arena have "historically addressed issues including race, diversity, marginalization, morality, gender, and spirituality" (p.17).

Leadership is important for change but the structure of public education favors management (Cuban, 1988). School principals who fail to attend to their management duties will not last long in their positions. However, school principals who ignore the leadership aspects for initiating change concerning emotional or traditional issues will generally survive with a lot less conflict (Cuban, 1988; Lugg & Shoho, 2006). Begley & Zaretsky (2004) argue the "full environment of administration is complex and that any school administrator that attempts to lead and manage without reference to the broader environmental context will quickly encounter difficulty" (p. 640). Begley & Zaretsky found that most principals in their study could tell at least one story that involved encounters with parents that had become hostile or abusive towards them or someone else

in their administration. Each of the negative encounters involved an issue that was considered emotional.

The question becomes how principals deal with a controversial issue when they are confronted with them and under what conditions does the influence of the organization's support, openness, and norms dictate their decisions. As society changes and a fresh outlook on team nicknames arises, does it really matter?

Walker & Qian (2006) claim it does. Their research provides a valuable insight, that as new principals come on board, they face a subtle yet distinct message that they are not "to make waves". Another insight discussed by Walker & Qian, is principals must "fit" into the culture that is already in place at their school of placement which is already embedded and will probably endure long after they are gone. Walker & Qian's insights perpetuate the "status quo" by rewarding conformity and stability, not only by seasoned principals but by new ones as well. However, Seo & Creed (2002) argue there are those principals, while not many, that are not "afraid to rock the boat" when it comes to change and reform.

The issue of objectionable team nicknames used in public high schools and school principals as the leader of those schools is one to be addressed in this study.

In order to answer the second research question, it is hypothesized that principals in schools with objectionable team nicknames are less willing to raise and sell the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames than those principals whose schools do not have objectionable team nicknames. Thus,

Hypothesis 9: School principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames will report less willingness to sell the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames than those principals whose schools do not have objectionable team nicknames.

Objectionable Team Nickname Issue

The issue of objectionable team nicknames being used in public high schools in Virginia will be studied for this project and tested using an issue selling model. The use of nicknames as a symbol representing schools is a tradition that started at Yale University in 1718 (Franks, 1982).

Nicknames are selected to signify a school's heritage, history, or founder. Other selection processes include using symbols to represent their individual schools based on cartoons, corporate sponsorships, or cultural icons that were considered meaningful at the time of the selection (Franks, 1982; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

The use of team nicknames for intercollegiate sports teams to "achieve solidarity and community" in American schools is a common practice (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

Students, faculty, and alumni wear the school's colors, wave banners, and participate in chants, songs, and cheers, and paint their faces during athletic events in support of their institution. School team nicknames may be used to unite, but research suggests that school nicknames also have the power to divide (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Eitzen, 1999; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Ward, 2004).

The nicknames selected and adopted by an educational institution, while originally selected to honor a group of people, may need to be reevaluated due to an increased sensitivity to ethnicity, gender, group differences, and a greater understanding of cultural history in our society (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Smith, 1997; Eitzen, 1999; Ward, 2004). Sports team nicknames, as identifying symbols used by educational institutions, have become a "highly visible and sometimes controversial reflection of American culture" (Fuller & Manning, 1987, p.61). Symbols have the ability to convey positive or negative images, but they also have the ability to "bind together individual members of a group and separate one group from another" (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001, p.48).

The team nickname of a particular school is one that is used to identify the entire student population (Ward, 2004). It is often one of great pride and evokes loyalty to the alma mater of many students long after graduation. In many

communities, generations of the same family will attend the same school and the allegiance to the school nickname is deeply engrained (Black, 2002; Ward, 2004).

Some team nicknames and imagery may evoke pride and loyalty, while others can be considered controversial and objectionable. There are team nicknames being used in Virginia public high schools that may be considered objectionable because they may "dismiss, differentiate, demean, and trivialize marginalized groups such as American Indians (for the use of American Indian imagery), African-Americans (for the use of Southern heritage or Confederate imagery), and women (for the use of sexist terms)" (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001, p.49). Satanic nicknames, while not addressed in the team nickname literature, will be included due to numerous articles found in the popular press against their use.

American Indian Nicknames

The labels of Native American, American Indian, and First Peoples have been used interchangeably in the literature and findings cited in this research. It is acknowledged these labels are for descriptive purposes only and that these labels group all tribes into one category while each tribe is sovereign and there are many cultural differences between them (Yellow Bird, 1999).

Supporters for the continued use of American Indian imagery for team nicknames and mascots give several reasons. The most popular argument is mascots honor Native Americans (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). It is claimed Native Americans are portrayed as noble, brave, and strong which are attributes any sports team would want when competing (Eitzen, 1999).

Second, the use of American Indian imagery for mascots is not an important issue. The defense is that since there are mascots modeled after "Vikings" and "Irish" with no objections from those groups, there should be no objections from American Indians either (Davis, 1993). It is felt by some that mascots can help to preserve Indian culture and this is just another issue about political correctness (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

A third argument for keeping American Indian mascots is that schools that wish to do so is because of the fear of alienating others (Wolburg, 2006). For example, some schools are afraid of losing their school identity and losing the support of alumni. The loss of support from alumni would cost the school in terms of lost funds and donations.

However strong the arguments may be to retain American Indian team nicknames and mascots, for almost five decades there have been protests to ban their use (Staurowsky & Wilson, 2001; Black, 2002; King, 2002, 2004). The growing

controversy is fueled because American Indian activists argue the faces, images, and symbols of American Indians are being used offensively which leads to negative stereotyping (Pewewardy, 1991, 1999, 2000, 2004; Banks, Davis, Slowikowski & Wenner, 1993; Staurowsky & Wilson, 2001; Black, 2002; Davis, 2002; King, 2002, 2004; Banks, 2003; Baca, 2004). The protests have led several colleges and universities, including Dartmouth, Marquette, Stanford, St. Johns, Syracuse, and Oklahoma State to change either their American Indian names or mascots (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Rosenstein, 1997; Rodriguez, 1998; Spindle, 2000; Miller, 2001).

There are several arguments against using American Indian imagery for team nicknames and mascots. First, is that American Indians are portrayed as caricatures instead of human beings. The mascots are confusing and misleading for many because they portray American Indians as savage scalpers, which distorts the actual history of American Indians in this country (Davis, 1993, 2002; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Black, 2002). The characterization of Native Americans as "bloodthirsty warriors" is not based in actual historical events since "whites invaded Indian lands, oppressed native peoples, and even employed and justified a policy of genocide toward them" (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001, p.

51). This distortion of history creates an image where frontiersmen in the Old West are heroes and fighting and killing Indians is necessary for survival (Davis, 1993).

Second, the use of American Indian mascots is racist and stereotypes the American Indian. The depictions include American Indians being portrayed as inferior, foolish, or violent and mock their culture and religion (Davis, 1993). The visual impressions during athletic events and depictions in school memorabilia shape a racist "mental framework" from childhood for many Native American children as well as non-Native American children (Clark, 2005, p. 231; Pewewardy, 1999).

Third, a number of teams that use American Indian mascots also use feathers, Native American dress, dances, chants, drumming, and other rituals which are considered sacred and religious to tribes (Hirschfelder, 1989; Davis, 1993; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; King & Springwood, 2001; King, 2002, 2004; King, Staurowsky, Baca, Davis & Pewewardy, 2002; Springwood, 2004; Staurowsky, 2004). The misuse of sacred rituals and religious symbols at sporting events portray them as trivial and meaningless to some non-Native Americans and objectionable to many American Indians (Banks, 1993; Pewewardy, 1999). The use of the tomahawk chop, artificial feathers, faked war calls, and symbolic scalping also mock the true meaning of Native American culture (Banks, 1993).

Banks, co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM)

explains:

The eagle feather is the highest honor which native people bestow on other individuals. This honor may be for some great deed, for being kind to elders, or for caring for the sick. It is similar to the Congressional Medal of Honor, so it is especially painful to see a mockery of this most precious spiritual ritual, as it is when intoxicated fans, bedecked with chicken feathers, imitate Hollywood's version of Native Americans (p. 8).

Another argument against the use of American Indian imagery is the homogenization of American Indian cultures (Davis, 1993; Black, 2002; King, 2002). Native Americans portrayed as mascots are grouped as one people while in reality there are many tribes with cultural differences between them (Davis, 1993; Yellow Bird, 1999). American Indians being portrayed as a mascot permits society to define who they are versus allowing Native Americans to determine how society thinks of them (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

The debate of whether the use of American Indian imagery for team nicknames and mascots is objectionable continues to this day. As reviewed in the literature, there are arguments for and against their use. However it must be noted that a number of organizations have taken a stance regarding this issue and have written official policies, most notably arguing stopping the use of American Indian imagery in sports.

In April 2001, the United States Commission on Civil Rights reviewed the team nickname issue and suggested non-Native American schools discontinue the use of American Indian symbols and imagery (www.usccr.gov). The New York State Education Commissioner, Richard Mills, also in 2001, urged the supervisors of the districts in the state that used American Indian mascots to immediately begin the process of adopting new mascots for their sports programs (www.timesunion.com).

Also in April 2001, the NCAA Executive Committee referred the review for eliminating the use of American Indian imagery by NCAA member institutions to the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (MOIC) and the Executive Subcommittee on Gender and Diversity Issues. This move was made in response to three events:

1. The Executive Committee's review of issues related to the Confederate battle flag and its criteria for evaluating potential NCAA championship sites
2. St. Cloud State University President Roy Saigo's request and petition to the Executive Committee for a resolution stating the NCAA does not condone the use of Native American logos and nicknames
3. The United States Commission on Civil Rights' statement on the use of Native American mascots and imagery as sports symbols (www.ncaa.org).

The NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee issued their report to the NCAA Executive Committee Subcommittee on Gender and Diversity Issues on the use of American Indian Mascots in Intercollegiate Athletics

in October 2002. On August 5, 2005, the Executive Committee of the NCAA announced a new policy to ban NCAA colleges and universities from displaying "hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames or imagery at any NCAA championships" (www.ncaa.org). Eighteen colleges and universities were put on the banned list and remained there until their offensive team nicknames, mascots, or logos were changed. Walter Harrison, Chair of the Executive Committee and president at the University of Hartford, declared in a press release that:

Colleges and universities may adopt any mascot that they wish, as that is an institutional matter, but as a national association, we believe the mascots, nicknames or images deemed hostile or abusive in terms of race, ethnicity or national origin should not be visible at the championship events we control (www.ncaa.org).

In 2005 the debate received national attention and reached a turning point when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) asked thirty-one colleges and universities in its conference to self-evaluate and defend their use of Native American imagery in their athletic programs or face losing the privilege to host post-season tournaments. A detailed timeline of American Indian mascot and nickname changes at different educational institutions can be found in the appendix section of this project. It is labeled Appendix A.

March 2007 found the American Sociological Association (ASA) Council issuing a statement on discontinuing the use

of American Indian nicknames, logos, and mascots in sport. The ASA decision was based in part on academic research that has shown the harm done to American Indian people through the continued use of these symbols which reinforce stereotypes of American Indians both past and present and shows disrespect for American Indian cultural and religious practices (www.asanet.org).

The ASA also determined the continued use of American Indian nicknames, mascots, and logos has been banned or condemned by numerous civil rights organizations, academic and educational institutions, and a large number of American Indian advocacy groups (www.asanet.org). Beginning February 2008, the NCAA also prohibited cheerleaders and band members from using Native American images, nicknames, and logos on their uniforms and in cheers, chants, and songs as well (www.ncaa.org).

Clarkson (2003) found 10.6 percent of high schools in the United States use American Indian imagery or mascots. With so many children being exposed to negative stereotypes, there is a growing concern among school administrators and educators that the portrayal of these negative images is a form of racism, which can lead to a feeling of moral superiority for some children and low self-esteem for others (Pewewardy, 2000; Staurowsky & Wilson, 2001). Pewewardy (1991) and Hirschfelder (1989) have argued the use of objectionable American Indian team nicknames and mascots go

against the basic tenants of educational principles and have voiced their concern over the use of these symbols in educational institutions (Davis, 1993).

Chiefs, Fighting Braves, Indians, and Warriors are examples of American Indian team nicknames being used in 20 or 6.5 percent of public high schools in Virginia. Indians and Warriors are the most popular nickname currently utilized. Each of these names was selected from the 2008-09 VHSL directory because of the negative connotations associated with them. The team nicknames of Chiefs and Warriors by definition are not necessarily objectionable. They were included only after viewing each school's website and determining the mascot included an American Indian being portrayed as the school mascot. Table 2 depicts the objectionable American Indian team nicknames with negative connotations and the public high schools utilizing them in Virginia.

Table 2. American Indian Nicknames Used in Virginia
Public High Schools

School	Location	Student Population
Chiefs (Each has an Indian mascot)		
Kempsville High School	Virginia Beach	2000
Monacan High School	Richmond	1725
Fighting Braves		
Indian River High School	Chesapeake	1681
Indians		
Fort Defiance High School	Fort Defiance	902
Gar-Field High School	Dale City	2499
J.J. Kelly High School	Wise	498
Northumberland High School	Heathsville	475
Pocahontas High School	Pocahontas	131
Powhatan High School	Powhatan	1165
Rural Retreat High School	Rural Retreat	300
South Hampton High School	Courtland	574
Stafford High School	Fredericksburg	1800
Warriors (Each has an Indian mascot)		
Chilhowie High School	Chilhowie	400
Henrico High School	Richmond	1480
Kecoughtan High School	Hampton	1860
Magna Vista High School	Ridgeway	1207
Matoaca High School	Chesterfield	1600
Nandua High School	Onley	400
Nansemond River High School	Suffolk	1350
Sherando High School	Stevens City	1200

Southern Heritage Nicknames

For decades the Rebel battle flag and the singing of "Dixie" have had two distinct meanings in the South (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). One school of thought is the symbols are historical and promote the South's heritage (Leib, 2004), the other is they symbolize slavery, separation, hate, and discrimination (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Leib, 2002).

Many traditional white southerners view the Confederate battle flag as a symbol of their sense of duty and the sacrifice of their relatives during the Civil War. They argue the Civil War was not about slavery but the government's opposition to the South's culture and traditions (Webster & Leib, 2002). Proponents of Confederate symbolism feel the symbols represent a heritage rich in history, pride, and loyalty (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

Opponents of Confederate symbolism argue the symbols represent a history of repression and enslavement for African-Americans and are demeaning of their ancestors (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). A common view held by many African-American southerners is that the Confederate flag has been "irremediably tainted by its use as a symbol of opposition to the Civil Rights movement" (Reed, 2002, p.92). Others view the Confederate battle flag as "innately racist and reflective of the values leading to the enslavement of their

ancestors in the antebellum south" (Leib, 1995; Webster & Leib, 2002, p.4).

While most debates concerning Confederate symbols have been argued as racial versus heritage (Webster & Leib, 2002), others have come to view the Confederate flag not as a racial issue, but as a social class issue (Reed, 2002). The Confederate flag has been used as a stage backdrop for many Southern-rock bands symbolizing "hell-raising and good times" (Reed, 2002). For many, it has come to symbolize a distancing from authority or a "don't tread on me attitude", still others view Confederate emblems as "redneck" (Reed, 2002, p.98).

According to Webster & Leib (2002), the two most important events in the history of the American South are the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Hundreds of monuments are constructed in the South honoring Civil War generals and have been in place for decades while memorials honoring the activists of the Civil Rights Movement are only recently being dedicated (Reeves, 1996). In a turning of the tide, in Richmond, Virginia during 1999, there was considerable debate over whether to add a Robert E. Lee mural to the City's Canal Walk development project (Holmberg, 2003; Leib, 2004). The debate is significant because Richmond was at one time the capital of the short-lived Confederate States of America and a new memorial or

public display featuring a former Confederate general was no longer welcome.

There has been considerable controversy surrounding the use of the Confederate battle flag and Confederate names for school and university names, mascots; emblems for the National Guard; state flags; and town and county seals for some time (Reed, 2002). During the summer of 2000, legislators from both the Republican and Democratic parties agreed to remove the Confederate battle flag flying atop the capital building in South Carolina, where it had flown for over 50 years, after facing an economic boycott by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Webster & Leib, 2002). In 2001, the Georgia legislature voted to remove the Confederate emblem from the Georgia state flag, adopting instead a flag that was a compromise to groups on both sides of the debate (Reed, 2002).

The symbolic meaning in a Confederate name came under fire when the executive board of the Robert E. Lee Council of Boy Scouts of America in Virginia voted to remove Lee from the name of the organization (Leib, 2004). The name had been used since 1942 but was changed to Heart of Virginia Council for Boy Scouts of America. Since Richmond, Virginia has a largely African-American population, the regional council feared the Lee name might deter young

African-American children from joining the Boy Scouts (Leib, 2004).

There has been controversy concerning the Confederate flag at the high school level as well. For example, a lawsuit was filed by six students and three parents to restore the Johnny Reb mascot after the school principal's decision to drop the school's mascot and to alter the school flag, a version of the Confederate battle flag (Carton, 1987). It was ultimately decided by the court that the principal's decision would stand but only after protests and much animosity from both sides. African-American parents and students were left to question "why anyone would retain a Confederate symbol if it evokes painful reactions" (Carton, 1987).

The Maryville, Tennessee school board voted on a policy to ban Rebel flags from all sporting events after a racial event occurred at a local high school in 2005 (Maryville School Board, 2005). Although the change had been discussed for some time; "recent racial tension had made the community more sensitive to the issue" according to the school director.

A flag is a "text to which different interpretative communities bring their own meanings" (Reed, 2002, p.82). The debate and controversy is another example of how the power of symbols has the ability to unite or divide because

of the emotional hold on people (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). It is suggested this is true by many "individuals and groups who partially understand themselves and locate their place in the world through their symbols and icons" (Forts, 2002, p.63). Symbols come from the history of the people they represent and for whom they hold meaning. The interpretation of the meaning of symbols to different groups may be in contrast to present day groups' understandings and interpretations of Confederate symbols and may warrant closer scrutiny (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Forts, 2002).

Confederates, Fighting Leemen, Generals, Rebels, and Rebel Pride are examples of team nicknames currently being utilized in nine or 2.9 percent of Virginia public high schools and can be considered objectionable to many because of negative connotations. The names were selected from the 2008-09 VHSL directory. Generals was selected as an example after viewing the school's website and determining the school's mascot was General Robert E. Lee, a Confederate General during the Civil War. In another example, one high school depicts General Lee on horseback holding a Confederate flag. Table 3 depicts the objectionable Confederate team nicknames with negative connotations and public high schools utilizing them in Virginia.

Table 3. Southern Heritage/Confederate Nicknames
Used in Virginia Public High Schools

School	Location	Student Population
Confederates		
Lee Davis High School	Mechanicsville	1550
Fighting Leemen		
Robert E. Lee High School	Staunton	820
Generals (Each is a Confederate General)		
Stonewall Jackson High School	Quicksburg	483
Lee High School	Jonesville	750
Rebels (Each has Confederate symbolism)		
Ervinton High School	Nora	200
Douglas Freeman High School	Richmond	1655
Patrick Henry High School	Glade Spring	387
Hurley High School	Hurley	280
Rebel Pride (Has Confederate symbolism)		
Fairfax High School	Fairfax	2050

Sexist Nicknames

The Civil Rights era of the 1970s highlighted the rights of African-Americans and the concerns of women and other minorities (Ward, 2004). The participation by women in high school and college athletics has increased dramatically since the passage of Title IX in 1972 that requires schools receiving federal funds to provide equal opportunities for men and women in sports (Eitzen, 1999; Stevenson, 2007). The use of team nicknames represents one area of concern for

women athletes (Ward, 2004) since many team nicknames selected by schools have negative sexual connotations or can be considered sexist (Fuller & Manning, 1987).

Research has determined the nicknames of athletic teams can undermine the value of women in sports (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Eitzen & Zinn, 1989, 1993; Duncan, 1993; Nuessel, 1994; Eitzen, 1999; Ward, 2004). The increase in numbers of women competing in sports has led to many educational institutions to choose to feminize their school symbols for their female athletic teams, since many team nicknames projected attributes of maleness or violence. This feminization has "contributed to the trivialization of women's sports and reflects the second class status of women as it is perceived by American society" (Fuller & Manning, 1987, p. 63).

There are a number of studies that have shown the various ways in which language aids in the defining, depreciation, and exclusion of women (Thorne, Kramarae & Henley, 1983; Eitzen, 1999). The feminization of names for women's teams emphasizes their gender so that one is aware that they are women first and athletes second (Fuller & Manning, 1987). The use of names for athletic teams is not a gender-neutral process and the nicknames selected are often depictions of masculinity, which leads to the stereotyping of superiority and inferiority as gender

issues. When this happens it causes gender division and hierarchy (Eitzen, 1999).

For example, Eitzen & Zinn (2001) examined the names, logos, and mascots of sports teams for men and women at 1,185 coeducational four-year colleges and universities and found approximately three-eighths use sexist names and over half have sexist names and/or logos for their college athletic teams which is a contributing factor to male dominance in sports. For their study, they identified eight gender-linked practices associated with team names that diminish and trivialize women. The practices include physical markers, the use of girl or gal, the use of feminine suffixes, the use of the noun lady, male as a false generic, male name with a female modifier, double gender marking, and male-female polarity.

Physical marking is a naming practice that emphasizes the physical appearance of women that is commonly used in educational institutions. An example is Angelo State University located in San Angelo, Texas. The men are known as the Rams and the women are the Rambelles which is often shortened to 'Belles

(www.angelo.edu/history_&_traditions/rambelles.html).

Another example is Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College located in Tifton, Georgia where the men are named the Golden Stallions and the women are known as the Golden

Fillies (www.abac.edu/pe). Miller & Swift (1977, p.87) argue this practice is sexist because "emphasis on the physical characteristics of women is offensive in contexts where men are described in terms of achievement".

The use of "girl" or "gal" stresses immaturity and irresponsibility of women (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). An example is Oklahoma State University located in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The men's teams are named the Cowboys and the women's teams are named the Cowgirls (www.osu//okstate.edu/). New Mexico Highlands University located in Las Vegas, New Mexico is another example where Cowboys and Cowgirls label the athletic teams (www.nmhu.edu). Miller & Swift (1977, p. 71) argue "just as 'boy' can be blatantly offensive to minority men, so can 'girl' have comparable patronizing and demeaning implications for women".

The use of feminine suffixes is a popular form of gender differentiation. This practice marks the gender of the team as well as devaluing women to a secondary position behind men (Nuessel, 1994). The most common examples found are done by adding the feminine suffixes such as "ette" or "esse" to the school's male name. The image of this type of feminization procedure implies something "small and helpless, not really the foe to be reckoned with that the

men's teams are (Fuller & Manning, 1987, p. 64). An example is Mississippi Valley State University located in Itta Bena, Mississippi. The men's athletic teams are known as the Delta Devils and the women's teams are known as the Devilettes (www.mvsu.edu). Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont is another school that utilizes this particular practice. The men's teams are known as the Cadets and the women's teams are the Cadettes (www.norwich.edu).

The use of the noun lady is used as a gender-marking prefix to the name of the male team (Nuessel, 1994). This practice has several meanings that demean women as athletes (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). First, lady is used to "evoke a standard of propriety, correct behavior, and elegance" which are characteristics that are not used to describe the type of aggressive behavior seen at sporting events. Lady is also a term recalled from the age of chivalry when women were seen as helpless and unable to do things for themselves (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). An example is the University of Florida Gators and Lady Gators in Gainesville, Florida (www.ufl.edu) and the University of Arkansas Razorbacks and Lady Razorbacks in Fayetteville, Arkansas (www.uark.edu).

Male as a false generic assumes that the masculine in the name's choice is the norm while ignoring the feminine. Miller & Swift (1977, p. 9) define this practice as "terms

used of a class or group that are not applicable to all members". An example is the use of the team nickname Rams at Colorado State University located in Fort Collins, Colorado (www.colostate.edu). It is impossible for a woman to be a Ram, even a Lady Ram, when a ram is an adult male sheep.

Male name with a female modifier is a practice that applies the feminine to a name that is usually male, which implies the female has a lower status. Examples are the Lady Friars of Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island (www.providence.edu), the Lady Statesmen of William Penn College in Oskaloosa, Iowa (www.statesmenathletics.com) and the Lady Gamecocks of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina (www.sc.edu). This practice "reflects role conflict and contributes to the lack of acceptance of women's sports" argue Fuller & Manning, (1987, p.64).

Double gender marking occurs when the name of the women's team is a diminutive of the men's team name combined with "belle" or "lady". An example is at the University of Colorado at Boulder where the men's teams are the Buffaloes and women's teams are the Lady Buffs (www.colorado.edu). Baron (1987, p.115) argues that this practice is "compounding the feminine and intensifies women's secondary

status perhaps to underline the inappropriateness or rarity of the feminine noun or to emphasize its negativity".

The final gender-linked practice is male-female paired polarity. This practice is used when the men and women's teams are assigned names that represent a male-female opposition. When this practice is utilized, the men's teams "embody competitiveness and other positive traits associated with sport, whereas the names for women's teams are lighthearted or cute" and women are "trivialized and de-athleticized" (Eitzen, 1999, p.36). The trivialization of women's athletic names does not seem appropriate for highly trained athletes (Fuller & Manning, 1987). An example is the College of Wooster located in Wooster, Ohio (www.wooster.edu). The men's athletic teams are the Fighting Scots and the women athletes are referred to as the Scotties, which is also the shortened version of the breed of a cute little dog.

While most research concerning women in sports has been done at the collegiate level, it is assumed for this study, sexist connotations in team nicknames can undermine girls participating in sports at the high school level as well. The traditional male team nicknames and mascots at many high schools can be argued to strengthen the image of female

inferiority by making girls invisible or secondary as discussed in this section.

Barons, Black Knights, Cavaliers, Dukes, G-Men, Knights, Minutemen, Stallions, and Statesmen are examples of objectionable sexist team nicknames being used in 29 or 9.3 percent of the public high schools in Virginia. Each of these names was selected from the 2008-09 VHSL directory based on the practice of gender-linking of male as the false generic as previously discussed. The above selected names represent the masculine in the name as the norm while ignoring the feminine entirely. Table 4 depicts the objectionable sexist team nicknames with negative connotations and the public high schools utilizing them in Virginia.

Table 4. Sexist Nicknames Used in Virginia
Public High Schools

School	Location	Student Population
Barons		
Bluestone High School	Skipwith	580
Black Knights		
Charlottesville High School	Charlottesville	1140
Blue Knights		
Coeburn High School	Coeburn	412
Cavaliers		
Caroline High School	Milford	1100
Carroll County High School	Hillsville	826
Chatham High School	Chatham	670
Clover Hill High School	Midlothian	2100
Holston High School	Damascus	320
Jefferson Forest High School	Forest	1350
King William High School	King William	560
Lakeland High School	Suffolk	1450
Lord Botetourt High School	Daleville	1055
Princess Anne High School	Virginia Beach	2200
W. T. Woodson High School	Fairfax	1800
Dukes		
Cumberland High School	Cumberland	357
Gloucester High School	Gloucester	1950
Windsor High School	Windsor	490
G-Men		
Graham High School	Bluefield	515
Knights		
Buckingham High School	Buckingham	401
Cave Spring High School	Roanoke	900
Thomas Dale High School	Chester	2400
James River High School	Buchanan	408
Floyd E. Kellam High School	Virginia Beach	2008
Spotsylvania High School	Spotsylvania	1200
Turner Asby High School	Bridgewater	1096
Minutemen		
Liberty High School	Bedford	1037
Stallions		
Green Run High School	Virginia Beach	1900
South County High School	Lorton	950
Statesmen		
Randolph-Henry High School	Charlotte Court House	750

Satanic Nicknames

The use of satanic nicknames for sports teams in sports scholarly research is practically non-existent but the research by scholars of cults and cult activities is found to be abundant. The popular press has also covered this issue on many occasions, especially after incidents of school violence and the Halloween holiday. Satanism is the worship of Satan as an honored being and a religion that condones violence, hatred, and revenge (Clark, 1994). Classical Satanism often involved human sacrifice and illegal acts while Modern Satanism is based upon ritual magick and the "anti-establishment mentality of the 1960s and focuses on "rational self-interest with ritualistic trappings" (Barton, 2003).

Anton Szandor LaVey founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco, California in 1966 (www.churchofsatan.com). As an organized religion, Satanism claims to have approximately 10,000 members in the United States (Zeddies, 2000). Satanism is destructive and leads many individuals to believe the "promises of power, domination, and gratification" made to its members (Clark, 1994). Many Modern Satanists have made it an important point to distinguish themselves from groups that practice devil worship.

Devil worship is defined by the Church of Satan as "the various informal activities which have appeared in the 1980s concerning the teenage use of satanic symbols, killings by serial killers professing to have been worshipping the devil, and various reports of 'satanic' crime" (Barton, 2003). The increase of youth involvement in cults, including satanism, gangs, and skinhead groups has parents and educators concerned and fearful (Zeddies, 2000). Several incidents of school violence and mass murder that include Pearl High School in Mississippi in 1997, Thurston High School in Oregon in 1998, and Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999 are examples of the destruction and violence these cults can bestow upon communities (Zeddies, 2000).

Research conducted by Kelly (1990) argues there are general characteristics for youth that become involved in satanism which include a history of deviant behaviors involving aggression and violence; alcohol and drug abuse; obsession with heavy metal music; and an obsession with satanic symbols, nicknames, and literature. Zeddies (2000) builds upon those characteristics by also adding poor relationships with parents, family dysfunction, defiance of authority, lack of moral development, and a lack of concern for others.

The popular press reporting of satanic rituals has included incidents of sexual abuse, child abuse, and the forced consumption of flesh and blood from human sacrifices. This has led to what Siano (1993) has termed "satanic panic". The incidences of tragic school violence in conjunction with satanic panic and individual religious beliefs are assumed to have led several groups of parents and communities to call for the discontinued use of satanic mascots and nicknames in their local schools.

For example in Lancaster County, Virginia, a school board member asked to have a public forum in which to decide if the Red Devil mascot was a Satanic symbol or a harmless image after several teachers and parents asked that the mascot be removed from the gym floor and team uniforms (Latane, 1997). In 2002, school board members in Springville, Utah voted to keep the Red Devil mascot in one of their schools only after the image of the mascot was "toned down to a kinder and gentler incarnation" (Eddington, 2002).

A school board in Westlake, Ohio found themselves faced with this controversy when a lawyer who lives in the city suggested, "the devilish character, being used as a school mascot, could be seen as a violation of the church-and-state separation clause of the U.S. Constitution" (Iacoboni, 2003). A parent in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania withdrew her

children from attending public school and petitioned the local school board to change the school mascot from being a Blue Devil (O'Neill, 1997). In another incident, the Blue Devil mascot was removed from an Ontario high school after the supervisor of schools determined "the connotations of the word 'devil' should not be carried from church to school because the two are separate institutions and the mascot has offended a segment of the community based on their religious beliefs" (School's mascot offensive, 2001).

Blue Devils, Demons, Devils, Red Devils, and Sun Devils are examples of satanic team nicknames being used in 11 or 3.5 percent of public high schools in Virginia with Blue Devils being the most popular nickname. Each of these names was selected from the 2008-09 VHSL directory because of the negative connotations associated with them. Table 5 depicts the objectionable satanic team nicknames with negative connotations and the public high schools utilizing them in Virginia.

Table 5. Satanic Nicknames Used in Virginia
Public High Schools

School	Location	Student Population
Blue Devils		
Castlewood High School	Castlewood	287
Culpeper County High School	Culpeper	1960
Gate City High School	Gate City	485
Grayson County High School	Independence	642
Hopewell High School	Hopewell	1012
Mathews High School	Mathews	421
Varina High School	Richmond	1900
Demons		
Christiansburg High School	Christiansburg	1025
Devils		
Rustburg High School	Rustburg	840
Red Devils		
Lancaster High School	Lancaster	454
Sun Devils		
Salem High School	Virginia Beach	1800

Banning Objectionable Team Nicknames in High Schools

Many local school boards have felt the pressure to change objectionable team nicknames as previously discussed. People have a choice in whether to attend a professional sporting event or which college or university they are going to attend; but students attending public schools usually

must attend school in a district based on where their legal guardian resides.

As the depiction of American Indian team nicknames is offensive and objectionable to many and several schools have decided to adopt another nickname, by extension it can be assumed that Confederate, sexist, and Satanic team nicknames are objectionable to many as well because of negative connotations (Fuller & Manning, 1987).

The use of objectionable team nicknames utilized in public high schools is the issue being selected for this study for four reasons. First, the negative outcomes suggested by American Indian scholars, (Hirschfelder, 1989; Pewewardy, 1991, 2004; Davis, 1993, 2002) and education scholars (Burnett, 1969; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Colburn, 2000; Hoffman, 2002; Dolley, 2003; Terzian, 2004). Team nickname identity and team spirit are important and potentially life changing and altering for some high school students. Dolley (2003) states, "schools have a profound influence on how students will think for the rest of their lives" (p.1). Burnett (1969) has suggested high schools have a significant goal to help students achieve a status change from adolescence to adulthood through rites of passage embedded in the high school experience. Colburn (2000) argued school spirit is about believing in something larger than "one's self" and is something to be proud of,

not ashamed or embarrassed. In Hoffman's (2002) investigation of how students use their high school experience to transition from the status of children to young adults, it is argued that while academics are important, high schools are also expected to ensure the safety and well-being of its students by providing a positive learning environment that is free of violence and distractions (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983).

Pewewardy (1991; 2004) and Hirschfelder (1989) have argued the use of objectionable team nicknames and mascots go against the basic principles of educational standards and have voiced their concern over these symbols in educational institutions (Davis, 1993). It is the role of educators to eliminate stereotypes from all aspects of school life (Pewewardy, 2004).

Stereotypes shape students' consciousness and lifelong behaviors toward understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of many cultures. It is important students are taught in a positive culture with educational equity in a safe environment. The standards to achieve those goals are a priority (Fiore, 2001). The use of objectionable nicknames by some schools can make that school environment seem less supportive and safe to some children (Pewewardy, 2004). It may also send an inappropriate message to some children

about what is or what is not respectful behavior toward others.

Second, the use of school nicknames for athletic teams are sport symbols that do more than distinguish one team from another and can potentially convey more meaning than originally thought (Fuller & Manning, 1987). The use of team nicknames and mascots are powerful symbols of the educational organization which they represent because they have the ability to garner allegiance and loyalty to that organization, but also may be instrumental in shaping the image of the entire college or university (Slowikowski, 1993; Gilbert, 1998; Connolly, 2000). The use of sports team symbols may also reflect and promote one class of people dominating a minority class of another people (Ward, 2004).

School team nicknames, while at one time may have originally been used to "unify" the students, Ward (2004) states it is now time to reevaluate those same symbols due to changes in our society and culture. As people become "more sensitized to racism, sexism, and other exclusionary practices" the work of Eitzen & Zinn (1993, p. 33) and Eitzen (1999) suggests it is not acceptable to continue using team nicknames as symbols that groups of people may find objectionable.

Third, the recent statements and policy position of the NCAA banning the use of Native American imagery in college athletic programs. The NCAA adopted the new policies based on their own internal investigation and research that determined the negative use of Native American imagery is objectionable to many American Indians (NCAA, 2005). It is assumed for this study that if the negative use of Native American imagery is banned at the college level, it would be objectionable at the high school level as well and could impact high school athletic programs and policies.

Although Native American imagery is the only type of team nickname and mascot the NCAA is currently addressing; it is assumed for this study that the Native American nicknames used by schools are not the only nicknames that deserve closer scrutiny in terms of the image projected to others (Fuller & Manning, 1987). Schools should consider all team nicknames with negative connotations (Wright, 2006). Due to the scope of such a large project that would consider all types of names, only the use of objectionable team nicknames that utilize American Indian imagery, are Satanic, sexist, or relating to Southern Heritage or the Confederacy will be studied.

Fourth, American society has become more litigious. Many television shows that portray court action suggest to the public they just go to court if they have a problem. Our society is also one of instant gratification and the

mantra "I'm calling my lawyer" is used to both validate and intimidate (Wasser, 2007).

Lawsuits are a tool that many opposed to the continued use of objectionable team nicknames have utilized. The threat of legal action has to be taken seriously by school administrators that are continuously being asked to do more with fewer resources (Wright, 2006). There have been mixed results using this costly and time consuming method.

For example, in *Banks v. Muncie Community School*, 433F.2d 292 (7th Cir. 1970) plaintiffs sought to discontinue the use of the nickname "Rebels" and the use of the Confederate flag at school functions based on racial discrimination claims. The court rejected arguments that the mascot discriminated against African Americans by discouraging them from enrolling in extra-curricular activities because the plaintiffs were unable to present evidence a constitutional violation had occurred. The court did mention that the Confederate flag was offensive to African Americans and "good policy would dictate its removal" (Dolley, 2003).

In *Munson v. State Supervisor of Public Instruction*, plaintiffs sought to reverse a school board decision in Mosinee, Wisconsin to keep Mosinee High School's mascot the "Indians" because the use of the mascot perpetuated a racially hostile environment. The court disagreed, finding

the department and school board responded appropriately by applying the correct standard of what is deemed objectionable and responding to alleged racial problems (Dolley, 2003).

On the other hand, in *Crobsy v. Holsinger*, 852 F.2d 801 (4th Cir. 1988) the Fourth Circuit Court upheld the decision of the school's principal to remove a Confederate school mascot, "Johnny Reb", that African Americans found offensive. The court found that educational concerns were a legitimate reason to cancel a mascot that offended African Americans even though students have a First Amendment right in choosing a school symbol.

Many schools (see appendix A) have voluntarily changed their team names and mascots to avoid receiving complaints and being threatened with legal action (Wright, 2006). While there have been mixed results concerning the use of lawsuits for the purpose of banning objectionable team nicknames, it can be agreed this is a costly and time consuming process. Lawsuits brought against a public school system or the local school board take local financial resources to defend and take an administrator's time away from their students and classrooms (Wasser, 2007). It is also important to consider the ramifications and costs of legal action in a time of budget constraints. This makes the understanding of the barriers to selling the issue of

banning the use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools by high school principals to their school division administration important and timely.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the theory of issue selling to top management and the research related to objectionable team nicknames. The changing role of the school principal was discussed in respect to their increased accountability within the school system. This chapter also provided a review of the hypotheses for testing. Chapter three discusses the methodology utilized in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The review of the literature revealed a need to study the factors that make a high school principal more or less willing to "sell" the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames being utilized in public high schools to their school division administration. The issue selling literature revealed organizational support, top management openness, organizational norms, probability of success, and image risk are important determinants of an individual's willingness to sell an issue.

Chapter Three outlines the process of the methods and procedures used to develop the instruments, determine the population, identify the samples, and analyze the data collected to answer the research questions.

Research Questions

This study was designed to test an issue-selling model and to answer the following questions:

- 1) Under what conditions will high school principals “sell” the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration?
- 2) Is the issue of selling the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools perceived differently between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not?

Institutional Review Board

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required before any research projects can begin. The IRB is responsible for reviewing research proposals involving human subjects to ensure all federal, state, and local regulations are followed. A key concern for the IRB is the protection of research participants from unwanted or overly intrusive research methods.

The approval process required the writing and submission of a research proposal to determine the research methods utilized in this study respected the participants’ autonomy and right to privacy. In addition, the research proposal ensured all research participants were provided with

sufficient information about the study so they could provide a valid and informed consent to participate.

Written consent was required for personal interviews but was waived by the IRB for survey participants since their consent was given by their clicking on the submit button on the survey. The IRB approval for this research study is found in appendix B.

Research Design

The review of the team nickname literature has underscored the need for team nicknames to be re-evaluated periodically based on heightened awareness and a greater sensitivity to racism, sexism, and other offensive practices (Nuessel, 1994; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). Dutton & Ashford (1993) and Mullen (2005) suggest there must be favorable situational and personal factors at work in an organization if one is willing to "sell" a controversial issue to their superior.

A mixed-methods design is a distinct research design that incorporates qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination that can offset the weaknesses of each approach independently (Creswell, 2003). Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007) categorized mixed methods research into four distinct categories: triangulation, embedded, explanatory, and

exploratory (p. 59). The choice of which design is utilized is dependent upon the goals of the research.

Triangulation design is used to compare the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments. The embedded design is used when the analysis of one method compliments the analysis and results of another method. The explanatory design is used when understanding of the quantitative results are necessary. The exploratory design is used when the results from a first qualitative phase can help in the development of a second, quantitative phase.

Since no theoretical model existed to provide guidance on the objectionable team nickname issue in a bureaucratic hierarchy, it was decided the exploratory design was best suited for this research. The exploratory design was used for this project in order to see if new questions needed to be added to the web survey in order to answer the research questions adequately. Morse (1991) stated the ability to distinguish between mixed-methods designs is based upon the sequence of data collection and the priority assigned to the method.

The mixed-methods design occurred in two phases in a sequential format. Equal priority was given to the qualitative (QUAL) and quantitative (QUAN) phases of the design. Personal interviews were used for collecting data in the qualitative phase in order to refine the electronic questionnaire used in the quantitative phase. Since the

qualitative data resulted in refining the questionnaire as well as providing rich details on the experiences of dealing with objectionable team nicknames, it was decided the qualitative data contributed as much to the study as the quantitative data. Figure 3 illustrates the mixed-methods research model utilized for this study.

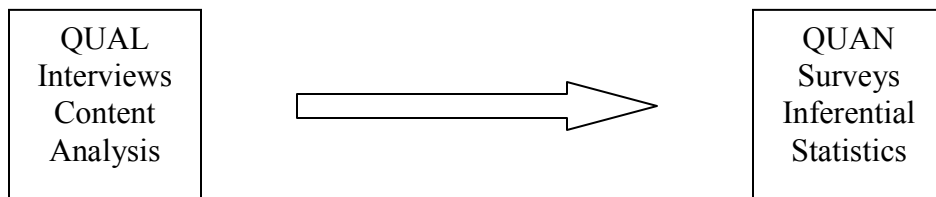


Figure 3.
Research Design Model

A mixed-method design was selected for this research for two reasons. First, the qualitative phase utilized personal interviews as a data collection method. Personal interviews are a data collection method used extensively by qualitative researchers and is described as “a conversation with a purpose” (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, p. 149). The data produced is rich in detail that allows researchers to gain knowledge about the context and history of the research question (Hohenthal, 2006). The interviews also allowed for an in-depth look into a sensitive and complex issue for information that may not be addressed on the questionnaire

(Birenbaum-Carmeli, 2008).

Second, the quantitative phase utilized an electronic survey as a data collection method. A survey questionnaire is an important tool to measure perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs because there is no other real way to study an individual's internal state and motivation for their behavior that can be directly observed (Babbie, 1990; McMillan, 2008). The data produced by the survey allows the researcher to have the ability to generalize participant's behavior to a larger population (Babbie, 1990; Dillman, 2000).

Study Population

Description of population

High school principals in Virginia served as the participants and provided data for the study. High school principals were selected because they are considered the "top managers" in their respective schools and because upward influence theory suggests they are the ones with their fingers on the pulse of their individual schools and more knowledgeable about issues needing to be addressed (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

Participant Identification

Qualitative Participants

The participants for the interviews were obtained by purposeful sampling. The participants were selected from a list generated from a LexisNexis Academic search. The search terms "offensive team nicknames" and "Virginia high schools" going back thirty years produced fifty-eight newspaper accounts. Each of these accounts was researched to determine acceptability based upon if the article really pertained to team nicknames and if Virginia high schools were involved. The more thorough review resulted in eight accountings that fit the search criteria.

The eight newspaper accounts resulted in eight separate incidents involving seven different high schools in a thirty-year span. The type of objectionable team nicknames mentioned included three involving Southern heritage or Confederate team nicknames or mascots, two involving American Indian team nicknames, two involving Satanic team nicknames and mascots, and one involving a gun wielding mascot. There were no written newspaper accounts concerning sexist team nicknames in Virginia during that timeframe.

The newspaper accounts included the names of the principals at the time and a list of eight potential participants was generated. While trying to find the contact information for each of the principals, it was

discovered that two were current principals and were part of the sample population for the electronic survey in the quantitative portion of this research and two were deceased. The widow of one of the deceased principals supplied the name and contact information for the assistant principal at the time of the incident and that name was added to the list as well, for a total of five possible participants.

Initial contact was made with each of the principals on the list by telephone. After explaining how their names had been found and the reason for the study, they were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. After each agreed, it was then explained that this interview would be recorded, the approximate length of the interview, the kinds of questions that would be asked, and their written consent (see appendix C) would be required. It was also stated that their identities would be kept confidential. Upon receiving their agreement for a second time, an interview was scheduled at their convenience and at the location of their choosing. Participants selected for the personal interviews were asked a series of several questions to determine if additional information or questions needed to be added to the survey questionnaire.

Quantitative Participants

A manual review of the public high schools in Virginia determined 22.2 percent of public high schools have team nicknames that can be considered objectionable. However,

all high school principals will have a chance to participate in this research since there are only approximately 300.

The reason for this decision is to increase the size of the survey population and to provide an opportunity for all high school principals to participate. While a school principal may not be currently working in a high school that has an objectionable team nickname; they may have worked in one previously that did. The input and feedback concerning a sensitive issue in a public high school from voluntary participation will be valuable.

Survey participants were identified from the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) mailing list. The Executive Director of VASSP agreed to provide a letter of endorsement to encourage participation in this project.

Principals of public schools that are dedicated to teaching a combination of grades 8-12 made up the study population. The decision to survey principals from those particular grade levels was because the VHSL partners only with the administrators and the coaching staffs at the high school level. The VHSL determined consistency in athletic programs is more organized for regional competition and student participation is greater at the high school level (www.vhsl.org).

The participants received an email containing a cover letter (see appendix G), a link to the web-based

questionnaire (see appendix F for the actual questionnaire), and a letter from the Executive Director of VASSP to encourage participation (see appendix D). Two reminder emails were sent as a courtesy to remind respondents who had not participated, to please do so (see appendix H and appendix I). Confidentiality was preserved by stressing the guarantee of it in the cover letter as well as emphasizing it in the follow up reminder emails. It was assumed the high school principals gave their consent to participation by completing the survey and clicking on the submit button.

Instrumentation

Qualitative Instrument

The interview guide used for the personal interviews was a collaborative effort between the researcher and the qualitative methodologist. The guide contained eleven questions and was designed to last between twenty and thirty minutes. The pre-selected questions included areas that would help to refine the survey instrument utilized in the quantitative phase.

The interview guide began with a request for the respondent to share their experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. It continued by asking about the factors that may have inhibited them from speaking up about the issue to their superior as well as the factors

that enabled them to speak out about the issue. A copy of the interview guide can be found in appendix E.

Quantitative Instrument

The questionnaire developed for this research was designed to answer the research questions and test related hypotheses. The survey addressed issues relating to the respondent's perceived organizational support, top management openness within their organization, and organizational norms favoring issue selling. These three situational factors are believed to influence the personal and mediating factors of perceived probability of success and perceived image risk. The questions used for these measures are borrowed from and based on previous research studies conducted by Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba (1997); Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill & Lawrence (2001); Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence & Miner-Rubino (2002); Ling, Floyd & Baldrige (2005); and Mullen (2005).

The survey instrument included 43 items and included measures for the six variables needed to answer the research questions as well as demographic information about the respondent. The survey was designed so flow and ease of answering questions was maintained.

Data included ordinal and nominal scales with the majority of the responses based on a five-point Likert

scale. In each section the Likert scale utilized five response categories: (1) "Strongly Agree", (2) "Agree", (3) "Undecided", (4) "Disagree", and (5) "Strongly Disagree". A copy of the survey used can be found in appendix F.

Variables and Measures

The review of the issue-selling literature and the discussion in Chapter Two resulted in the following variables being used for this study: organizational support, top management openness, organizational norms, probability of success, image risk, and willingness to sell.

Independent variables

Perceived organizational support

The variable perceived organizational support measured principal's perceptions concerning the extent to which their school division administration valued their contributions and well-being. The variable is ordinal and is measured using an eight-item perceived organizational support scale developed by Wayne, Shore & Linden (1997). Example of items included "The organization strongly considers my goals and values," and "Help is available from the organization when I have a problem." Items were assessed using a 5-point response format where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree, with lower scores representing more perceived

organizational support. Previous studies indicated Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$.

Top management openness

The variable top management openness was used to assess the perceived attitudes and mindset of top management in the principal's local school division to determine receptiveness concerning selling an issue. This variable is ordinal and is assessed with a six-item measure developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). Sample items included "I feel free to make recommendations to upper management to change existing practices" and "Good ideas get serious consideration from upper management." The items were rated using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with lower scores representing more perceived top management openness. Previous studies did not include a Cronbach's α score.

Perceived norms

The variable perceived organizational norms assessed the pressure exerted on a school principal to sell or not sell a controversial issue and that behavior is seen as normal and legitimate in the school division. Norms is an ordinal variable and was assessed using three items developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). An

example of an item included, "In my organization, controversial issues are kept under the table". The items were rated using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree. A higher score indicated norms that favored the open discussion of objectionable team nicknames. Previous studies utilizing perceived organizational norms reported Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$.

Mediating variables

Perceived probability of success

The variable probability of success is an ordinal variable and was determined by the school principal's confidence in selling the issue, the confidence the issue would be bought, and belief in the issue. The measure was developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). The items were modified to ensure they were relevant to the objectionable team nickname issue. The items used a 5-point Likert-type scales where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree with a lower score indicating a higher perceived probability of success. Previous studies report Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$.

Perceived image risk

The variable image risk is an ordinal variable and was assessed using Ashford's (1986) risk in seeking feedback scale. Six questions asked the principals' perceptions of how their images would be affected if they were to sell the objectionable team nickname issue. Items included "I would be nervous asking my boss how he/she evaluates my behaviors" and "I am frequently bothered by feelings of inferiority". The scale used a 5-point response format ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree with a higher score indicating a higher level of perceived risk to one's image. Cronbach's alpha =0.70.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable, willingness to 'sell' or raise and promote the banning of objectionable team nickname issue is a dichotomous variable and was assessed by three items developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). The items assessed the amount of time, energy, and involvement the school principal was willing to invest to sell the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=nothing to 5=a great deal of time, energy, or involvement. An example item is "How much time are you willing to invest in

selling the offensive team nickname issue to your superior?" A higher score indicated more of a willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue. A Cronbach's alpha score of 0.95 has been reported in previous studies.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses one through eight were used to answer research question one. Hypothesis nine was used to answer research question two.

H1: Higher perceived organizational support is positively associated with a school principal's perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

H2: Higher perceived organizational support is negatively associated with a school principal's perceived risk to their image.

H3: Perceived top management openness is positively associated with school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

H4: Perceived top management openness is negatively associated with image risk.

H5: Perceived organizational norms are positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

H6: Perceived organizational norms are negatively associated with the school principals' perceived image risk.

H7: School principals' perceptions of the probability of success are positively associated with their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

H8: School principals' perceptions of image risk are negatively related to their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

H9: School principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames will report a less perceived willingness to sell the issue rather than those principals whose schools do not have objectionable team nicknames.

Figure 4 illustrates the hypotheses and their direction of associations on an issue selling model.

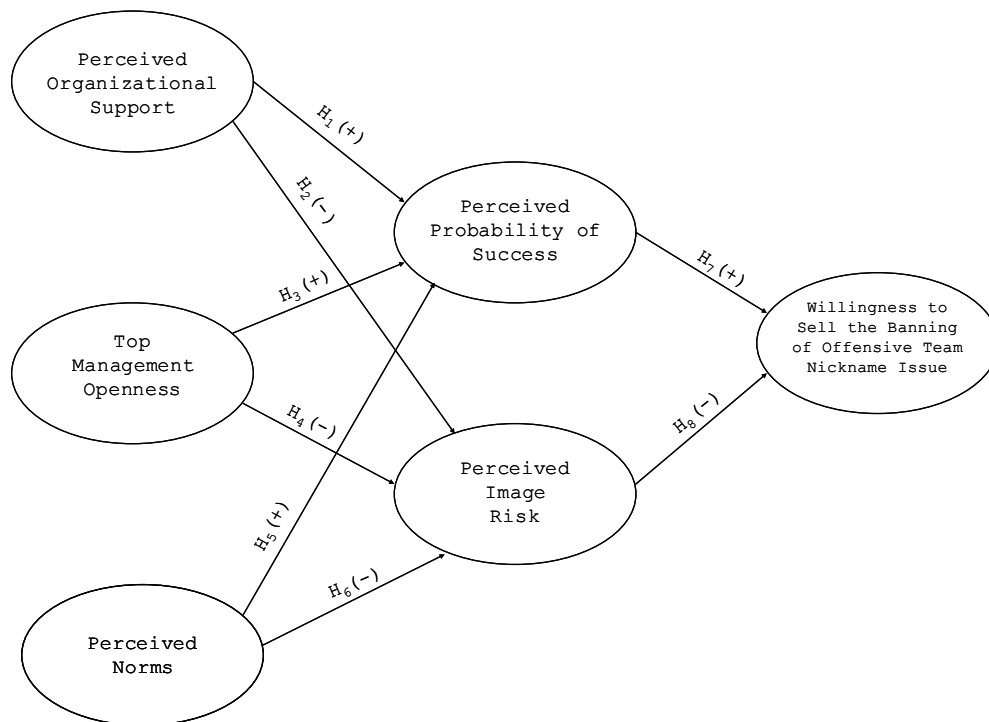


Figure 4. Issue Selling Model with Hypotheses Associations
Source: Mullen (2005).

Following data collection from the surveys, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the scales. An alpha score of 0.60-0.70 is recommended as the minimum score for reliability in social science research, with a higher score preferred (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Table 6 outlines the variables that were identified to test the hypotheses for the research questions and the Cronbach's alpha scores for this study.

Table 6. Hypotheses and Variables

Hypotheses	Variable	Range of Scores	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
DV	Willingness	1-5(nothing-a great deal)	#36,37,38	0.67
H1	Support	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#10-17	0.92
	Success	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#27,28,29	0.93
H2	Support	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#10-17	0.92
	Image	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#30-35	0.65
H3	Openness	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#18-23	0.93
	Success	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#27,28,29	0.93
H4	Openness	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#18-23	0.93
	Image	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#30-35	0.65
H5	Norms	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#24,25,26	0.79
	Success	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#27,28,29	0.93
H6	Norms	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#24,25,26	0.79
	Image	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#30-35	0.65
H7	Success	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#27,28,29	0.93
	Willingness	1-5(a great deal-nothing)	#36,37,38	0.67
H8	Image	1-5 (1=strongly agree)	#30-35	0.65
	Willingness	1-5(a great deal-nothing)	#36,37,38	0.67
H9			#43	

Instrument Testing

Dillman (2000) states it is important to pilot test the survey instrument before implementing. Gay (1999) recommends the pilot test be conducted using a small group of people similar to the sample population. The initial questionnaire for this study was tested on ten full-time faculty members at a small private liberal arts university. The purpose of the pilot test was to solicit important feedback regarding time needed to complete the survey, flow of the survey questions, and the content and construction of the questions. Each of these persons was selected due to their collective experience in the education and research disciplines.

Seven of the ten asked to participate and provide feedback did so. The feedback provided included moving the demographic questions to the beginning of the survey instead of putting them last. This was to give the principals something "easy" to start with. This suggestion was implemented. The second suggestion was to expand on the directions provided in order to clarify some points. This suggestion was implemented as well. A third point was to provide an incentive to complete the survey. This suggestion was rejected. It was felt that since this study dealt with employees of public institutions, an incentive

could be misinterpreted and therefore not appropriate for this study.

Data Collection

The data collected for this study occurred in two phases in a sequential format. Qualitative data was collected using personal interviews with retired and current high school principals. Quantitative data was collected using an electronic survey emailed to current high school principals in Virginia.

Qualitative Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was conducted face-to-face with willing participants in order to collect data for the qualitative phase. An interview guide was used so the researcher would not lose focus and ensure all relevant questions were asked (see appendix E). After a list of names for potential respondents was generated, a determined effort was made to try to locate each of those individuals. Of the potential respondents that could be located, a telephone inquiry was made requesting their participation in this study.

After agreeing to be interviewed, an appointment was arranged to meet each respondent in person. Each respondent was informed of the following information: (a) the purpose

of the study, (b) the anticipated length of the interview, (c) that the interviews would be digitally recorded, and (d) that their names and schools would be kept confidential. Respondents were then asked to sign the consent form (see appendix C) and were given their own copy of the consent form. The qualitative phase of the data collection process started after approval was received from the Institutional Review Board and continued for one month during August-September 2010.

Quantitative Data Collection

Data was collected by administering a cross-sectional, web-based survey of public high school principals in Virginia. Self-administered surveys using web-based tools provide a low cost and efficient method for obtaining data from survey respondents by eliminating the cost of printing, paper, and postage (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998; McMillan, 2008; Maronick, 2009). A web-based survey also allows a larger sample to be reached and provides a vehicle where respondents can remain completely anonymous when an outside company administers the survey and compiles the results (Al-Omiri, 2007; McMillan, 2008; Maronick, 2009). The anonymity of an electronic survey was particularly important for this study because of the potential emotional and divisive nature of the

objectionable team nickname issue (Al-Omiri, 2007). E-mail as a data collection tool allowed responses to be collected into a web database and downloaded into a statistical software package, therefore eliminating mistakes that occur with manual data entry (Bonometti & Tang, 2006; Al-Omiri, 2007).

The data collection process recommended by Maronick (2009) for web-based surveys is similar to Dillman's (2000) multi-phase survey research recommendations. This process includes: (1) survey notification and cover letter, (2) a web link for the survey, (3) reminder emails, (4) replacement questionnaire links, if needed, and (5) an alternative means of contacting the survey population if the email links do not work correctly.

Participants received an initial email containing a cover letter that outlined the purpose of the survey and asked for their participation. The email also had an attached letter from the Executive Director of VASSP endorsing the study and the link to reach the survey via Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a private company that administered the survey and collected responses. This first step of the process began on September 15, 2010.

A reminder email was sent one week following the emailing of the initial letter. This email re-emphasized

the importance of their participation and confidentiality assurance.

A third reminder email was sent two weeks after the initial contact was made. This email also encouraged respondent participation and stressed the importance of their feedback in this research project.

As suggested by Maronick (2009), an alternative means of contacting the survey population if needed was employed. Forty-two of the initial emails were returned as "undeliverable". A manual search of each high school's website was done to compare the VHSL directory information with the information on the website. It was concluded that either the name or the email address listed in the VHSL directory was incorrect. The corrections were made and the emails were re-sent. Of the corrected emails, fourteen were returned as "undeliverable" again. Each of those fourteen principals received their initial cover letter, a paper copy of the survey, the letter from VASSP, and a self-addressed and stamped envelope via the postal service. Follow-up reminders were sent to those fourteen individuals via the postal service as well. The use of Maronick's (2009) suggestion to use an alternative means of contacting a potential participant resulted in an additional five surveys being completed and returned.

Data Analysis

An initial assessment of responses was conducted using descriptive statistics for all respondents. This included demographic information and the variable scales by calculating the mean score, standard deviation, and the range of scores received. The mixed methods approach for this project resulted in two types of data analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was on-going throughout the interview timeframe and occurred in a spiral fashion (Creswell, 2003). Creswell identified four steps that occur in qualitative data analysis that start with raw data and end in a final report. The steps include organization, perusal, classification, and synthesis.

The organization step included organizing the data into a filing system that kept the researcher on track. The perusal step included getting an overall "sense" of the data. This step also included memoing, or "preliminary analytic notes" (Charmaz, 2006, p.3).

The classification step is when categories and themes emerged from the coding process. A single coder, the researcher was used in this process with input from the qualitative methodologist. A short answer sheet was utilized to compile the answers to the eleven interview

questions. The short answer sheet provided the ability to see at a glance the results of those interviews. Three stages of coding were utilized to develop the five themes that emerged. The final step, synthesis, is when the themes were merged into a timeline or pattern that summarized the respondents' real-life experiences.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The levels of measurement for the variables in this exploratory study are nominal and ordinal. Inferential statistics were determined through the use of correlation analysis and regression analysis.

The use of correlation analysis was appropriate since it measures the overall relationship between two variables. The technique answers the questions whether two variables are related and the strength of that relationship (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). A correlation analysis is particularly appropriate when the researcher has a little *a priori* knowledge about the relationships between the variables (Ott, 1994; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Regression analysis was selected as the next appropriate statistical testing because the outcome measure, or dependent variable, is dichotomous and the research question pertains to the likelihood of an outcome occurring

given multiple independent variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black 1998).

Non-Respondents

Poor response rates are problematic for a descriptive and exploratory study because the ability to generalize findings to a population with confidence can be questioned (Al-Omiri, 2007). The source of non respondents was expected to come from those who refused to participate in the survey for a variety of reasons. In order to decrease the number of non-respondents, three different techniques were utilized.

First, a letter from the Executive Director of VASSP endorsing this research was included in the initial electronic mailing to participants. An endorsement letter has been found to increase survey participation by lending credibility to the research in the minds of the participants (Dillman, 2000).

In addition, Dillman (2000) acknowledges the necessity of "personalization" of communications as being helpful for obtaining satisfactory responses. As an example, a letter addressed to an individual respondent suggests the respondent is important and their opinions are relevant. A similar technique is achievable in web surveys as well (Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). Emails were set up so that each

respondent received an email with only his/her name visible. Each email also included the definition of the topic and its importance and relevance to a high school principal, and a request for participation.

The use of multiple contacts also helped to increase the response rate. It is not believed non-response issues were due to the inability of contacting each of the school principals. The names, addresses, and email addresses were believed to be the most current contact information available. For those principals whose survey was "undeliverable", a paper copy of the cover letter, a copy of the letter from the Executive Director of VASSP, the survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope was mailed directly to the high school. Every effort was made to encourage participation and reduce the "refusals".

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the variables is based on a Cronbach's alpha measure of 0.60-0.70, which is considered an acceptable level and indicates the items in the scale are "tightly connected" (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Table 7 lists the variables in the issue selling model utilized in previous studies and the Cronbach's alpha scores found in those studies as well as the Cronbach's alpha

scores in the current study. Validity was expected to be determined through statistical testing and pilot testing.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha Scores

Variable	Previous Studies	Current Study
Organizational support	0.74	0.92
Top management openness	NR	0.93
Organizational Norms	0.75	0.79
Probability of success	0.82	0.93
Image risk	0.70	0.65
Willingness to sell	0.95	0.67

Note: NR=not reported.

Expected Findings

Based on Mullen's (2005) study concerning the selling of safety issues in the workplace to superiors, it was expected that perceived probability of success and image risk concerns would have the greatest influence on the willingness to sell the banning of objectionable team nicknames by high school principals to their school division administration. The relations of perceived organizational support, top management openness, and perceived organizational norms favoring issue selling were also expected to be significant in the relations of probability of success and image risk, thereby significantly impacting the willingness to sell.

Expected Limitations of Data

The primary limitation was expected to be the availability of data. Non-response was a limitation to this research project. The concern for non-response includes not only those who did not wish to participate for any reason, but those who might have been offended by the sensitive nature of the objectionable team nickname issue being studied as well. It was essential that high school principals in Virginia participate and return their surveys.

A multi-stage data collection method and an endorsement from the Executive Director of VASSP were utilized to help increase the participant response rates. The wording of the questions, the ability to not answer any question that was uncomfortable, and a place to add comments were utilized to help increase the participant response rates as well.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the methods utilized for this research. The chapter has also provided a research model to link the variables to the research questions and hypothesis for statistical testing. Chapter Four will discuss the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the research was to answer the questions (1) under what conditions will high school principals "sell" the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration and (2) is the issue of selling the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools perceived differently between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not?

This chapter provides the findings of the study. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides the findings of the qualitative data collected. The section includes descriptions of the respondents, criteria for the soundness of the research, and content analysis findings. The second section presents findings of the quantitative data collection phase and includes the following: description of the respondents, scale reliability and validity, and analysis of the hypotheses. The conclusion of this chapter summarizes the findings in relation to the hypotheses and research questions utilizing both phases.

Qualitative Phase

Respondents

Purposeful sampling provided the names of five principals as potential interview candidates. All agreed to be interviewed for a 100% response rate. It needs to be noted that a total of seven principals were interviewed, not five as initially projected.

After the interview phase of the study was completed and the electronic survey was administered, one school principal responded with detailed comments on his survey about how he felt the issue of objectionable team nicknames was too complicated to be addressed adequately in a survey. He was contacted for an interview by email and agreed. It was discussed with him that this interview would be recorded and would require written consent. He agreed and scheduled the appointment. At the time of his interview, he also brought his assistant principal who would provide the detailed background and history of the team nickname issue at his school. It was decided these two principals could provide a wealth of information and experiences and so they were included in the data collection, content analysis, and results.

The makeup of the interview respondents included six men, one woman, four retired principals, and three current

principals. The seven individuals that were interviewed represented five different high schools that had experienced controversy surrounding their team nickname or mascot in the past. The schools were located in large metropolitan areas as well as small communities. The type of objectionable team nickname issue that they dealt with included American Indian, Southern Heritage, and satanic.

Table 8 provides a summary of the characteristics of the interview respondents and the number of occurrences with each type of team nickname experienced.

Table 8. Characteristics of Interview Respondents

Team Nickname Type		Sex	Status
American Indian	(4)	Male (6)	Ret. Principals (4)
Southern Heritage	(2)	Female(1)	Cur. Principals (3)
Satanic	(1)		

Confidentiality was assured before and during the interview process. Pseudonyms are used in the discussion portions of chapters four and five in order to honor the commitment of keeping their identities and school association confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Interview respondents will be identified as Principal "A", "B", "C", "D", "E". "F", or "G" and all references will be to "he" or

"him" versus "she" or "her" to protect the female principal's identity.

Criteria for Soundness of the Qualitative Research

Lincoln & Guba (1985) proposed four constructs necessary to establish the "truth value" (p. 20) of qualitative research. The first construct is credibility and relates to internal validity. This was established by accurately identifying and describing the interview respondents. The second construct is transferability and relates to external validity. This is difficult to establish. Transferability implies that generalization can occur which is difficult to accomplish since the interviews were conducted at a point in time. It would be impossible for another researcher to duplicate those findings since the world is always changing and points of view can change over time. Also, interview data collection is based on trust. Another researcher would change the dynamics of the relationship established by the first researcher. In order to overcome this weakness in the qualitative phase, the findings are transferred to the public policy discussion in chapter five for future recommendations.

The third construct is dependability. This was established by memoing and documenting the changes of the study as it progressed. Any changes were examined to

determine if they were relevant to future interviews. The fourth construct is conformability and it relates to objectivity. This was established by sharing the findings with the qualitative methodologist for feedback. A data audit was also conducted to examine the data collection and analysis procedures to determine there was no distortion of the data or personal bias of the researcher.

Findings

Content analysis of the interview data was performed using an interpretative approach as outlined by Berg (2007). This process included the specification of categories through coding and applying the same specific application of rules to each interview. The coding process included open coding, coding frames, and axial coding (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Berg, 2007).

The application of rules to each interview included asking the same questions of each participant, allowing each participant to relate their experiences in their own words, and memo writing after each interview in order to capture the essence of what was said.

The goal of the qualitative approach for this study was to refine the survey utilized in the quantitative phase. During face-to-face interviews, high school principals were asked to relate their experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. It was felt that

personal interviews would reveal any additional variables that needed to be examined when dealing with a controversial issue. The resulting interviews met and exceeded that goal. The pre-selected questions on an interview guide, as well as a request to share their experiences, resulted in data that was rich in detail.

The characteristics that were mentioned by the participants that either enabled them to speak freely or inhibited them from speaking to their superior mirrored those already incorporated into the electronic survey. However, the answer sheet also provided reinforcement for several of the decisions to utilize specific questions on the survey.

For example, the first question on the interview guide, asking for the title of their direct report or immediate supervisor, provided six different responses. The decision to refer to an immediate supervisor as "school division administration" was an excellent one and would ensure survey respondents were clear about its meaning to avoid confusion.

The answer sheet also highlighted how administrative support and open mindedness were important factors when dealing with the team nickname issue. For example Principal "B" stated: *"Our relationship-we communicated, frequently and very openly. This is the way I felt like I had to be with my superior. I didn't want to be blind-sided and*

neither did my assistant superintendent. No surprises".

Principal "C", although his comments addressed a different type of support and open mindedness, his experience was similar. He stated: *"The superintendent provided much support, even if it was behind the scenes. Whatever I needed, I got it. It didn't matter, marketing, legal assistance, whatever. He made sure I had it".*

Lastly, it was determined that the length of time a principal was employed at his/her school and the length of time the principal was employed in a particular school division were important as well. Several respondents reported tenure of the principal was important in order to establish a rapport with their supervisor as well as establishing themselves in the local community. They felt an established relationship helped them to feel comfortable enough to mention a controversial subject such as objectionable team nicknames. Their responses about tenure also included the concern for staying at the school long enough to have the time to deal with any ramifications that may have resulted from the issue. Principal "A" remarked: *"Tenure is important to build trust. Trust is important for dealing with issues. Tenure now is not consistent. They have a new principal now. They get a new one about every two*

years. I was there eleven years; six years into my tenure and it (the mascot) was a non-issue. The new students did not even know what a (mascot) was."

As well as refining the survey questionnaire, the qualitative approach also provided the opportunity to discover themes that emerged from the data through content analysis. When the interview participants were asked to relate their experiences concerning the objectionable team nickname issue, the data was rich in detail and helped to explain the depth and the complexity of the issue that the available literature only touched upon.

Charmaz (2006) defined coding as "the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data, through coding, you define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means" (p.46). The open coding produced eighty codes. The second phase included using a coding frame and axial coding for a more focused analysis of the data. The initial eighty codes were placed into a coding frame resulting in a focused coding of fourteen concepts. Axial coding was then conducted which resulted in the emergence of five themes. The resulting themes are labeled: (1) tradition, (2) "blown out of proportion", (3) "way it was handled", (4) process, and (5) care.

The first theme that emerged from the content analysis is labeled tradition. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2000) defines tradition as an "inherited pattern of thought or action" or as "a custom, a specific practice of long standing." The theme touched on topics that included the history of the team nickname, the identity of the students coupled with the tradition of the nickname, and the emotion that is attached to the nickname.

Tradition is an area that was mentioned by all seven interview respondents. Tradition, as "an inherited thought" or "a long standing practice" can be either positive or negative in the context of objectionable team nicknames. Tradition grounds individuals in the organizational context because they know what to expect based on past actions and behaviors. It can also enhance the school culture by providing a single identity to all students for school spirit and pride (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). Principal "E" summed up this aspect in the following statements: "*Our team nickname was very traditional in our community. Grandparents, parents, kids-all attended the same high school. Also, the further back you go, the less options kids had and school had a much more central focus. It was the social network at the time.*" Tradition can also be

steeped in history and become part of one's school identity, especially older high schools. There are some families in school districts where generations have attended the same school and pride in the school is deeply embedded. As Principal "G" commented, *"The nickname went deep into the tradition of the community. It had been the nickname for generations of families."*

Tradition also carries a negative context as related to objectionable team nicknames. Tradition, related to negatively, can allow traditions to continue that are hurtful to some. Principal "G" found this to be the case with his high school's team nickname and mascot, *"It (the mascot) was a positive stereotype. That stereotype also upset people, because it was still a stereotype. You take people with decades of passion behind them versus people with centuries of passion behind them. This needed to be looked at."* As negative traditions are allowed to continue, it becomes so accepted that the negativity of the tradition is viewed as being normal. Terzian's (2004) case study of student writing in high school newspapers revealed school spirit can be "undemocratic and static" and the feeling of "school spirit only works if it includes all students and its definition is open to revision" (p. 42). This same

revelation was stated by Principal ``G``: *"What changed my mind on this whole issue was due to two students that spoke before the school board. They said 'There was no overt experiences but the nickname was problematic for them.' They spoke so eloquently about the issue."*

The second theme is labeled "blown out of proportion". This was an *in vivo* code (Charmaz, 2006), a code that referred to a happening defined by the respondents own words or their meaning attached to a particular happening or experience. This theme was mentioned by all seven interview respondents and includes two different elements. First, "Blown out of proportion" includes the media handling of the situation. Critics claim the media often exaggerate fears that lead to unnecessary measures and "gonzo justice" (Altheide, 1997). As stated by Principal ``C``: *"The majority of the students agreed the symbol needed to be changed. A very small group, which included some students, their parents, and sympathizers, did not want the change. It was a very small group that stirred the pot. They held a rally, garnered lots of press. The newspaper really fueled it."* Principal "B" also felt the media "fueled" the situation, *"I can remember two incidents in twenty years."*

Both times I was approached outside of the office and neither party was willing to go before the council. It must not have been too concerning since they were unwilling to take their issue any further. The press made something out of nothing." Principal "D" was unable to understand how an in-house issue warranted so much attention, "This was an incident that did not even make the local papers. This group did not go to the PTA (Parent Teacher Association), they did not go to the school board. There were no hard feelings, I have no idea how this could have made national coverage."

The second element of the theme ``blown out of proportion'' includes how the team nickname issue usually involved a relatively small group of people. This element of the theme is consistent with research conducted on agenda setting. In agenda setting there are "issue networks" that include activists who wish to publicize issues in order to achieve change (Kingdon, 1995; Koven, Shelley, & Swanson (1998). As stated by Principal ``G'', there are two sides to an issue: *'The level of rhetoric on both sides was very nasty. The principal's and staff's credibility were attacked. People were personally attacked by the people who*

wanted the change. It was unfair and it was not justified."

And Principal "A": *"This event could have been the result of media intervention, parent intervention, or special interest intervention. All of this came to head from the (team mascot) but the emotion and outrage was already there, left over from the 60s and the Civil Rights movement."*

The third theme is another *in vivo* code, "way it was handled". The majority of the respondents felt the issue was handled in a negative manner. The negative experiences include how the objectionable team nickname issue was handled by the school board and by the principals themselves. The negative handling of the team nickname issue, in their experience, resulted in ramifications "that can be felt to this day" even though the incidents may have happened years, and in some cases, decades earlier.

This theme is significant because as the role of the high school principal evolves, their decision-making skills are important in the context of their leadership abilities. Nolan (1998) describes the role of the principal as important since they play an extended role into the community surrounding their school. If their decisions are overridden by the school board for example, their credibility among their constituents is also questioned

(Nolan, 1998; Lester, 2001). The theme, "the way it was handled", was mentioned by all seven of the interview respondents. As stated by Principal "E": *"I think the way it was handled was wrong. We are an educational institution; we should have taught this and it was not the way it happened. It could have been a really good opportunity. It could have been part of the curriculum about not having stereotypes. It would have provided a deeper understanding of why it's an issue. The teaching moment and a good opportunity were missed by having it forced upon us."* Principal "E" continued: *"It wasn't a political process. It was forced upon us. We had a committee. There were a lot of people on the committee and the committee voted not to change the nickname. The committee had teachers, students, parents, and community people. They were not listened to. The final analysis is that the school board decided and overrode the decision of the committee."*

The majority of the experiences related were negative. However, there were three principals who felt that their experiences in the way the objectionable team nickname was handled led to positive outcomes. The ability to turn a

negative situation into a positive learning experience is beneficial for principals, especially new ones. Clarke & Wildy (2004), discovered while conducting a narrative analysis, that any experiences dealt with by a principal could lead to future heightened awareness of their community and school culture. Principal "A" best captures this: *"I used this incident as an advantage, to bring students together, to try to heal the issue of divisiveness in the school. It took six to eight months, took many focus groups. Focus groups got black and white students to talk to each other. They agreed to disagree. They ended up liking each other. They learned how to respect each others' differences."* Principal "D" related how different the issue was when addressed in a positive and open format: *"My principal provided a forum where you could speak freely. It was open, friendly and polite. There were no bad feelings. There was no anger."* Principal "F" had dealt with the team nickname issue on previous occasions with different outcomes as stated: *"This is not the first time I have dealt with (mascot/issue/objections) in my career. If you would only go a little further back, you will find incidents of where the team nickname has changed and it has not been*

devastating for the school. I can personally relate times when it was decided a name change was appropriate and it was handled in a positive manner. No negative repercussions."

The fourth theme, care, was mentioned by all seven interview respondents. Care, as a theme, encompasses the care and concern each of the principals had for their students. Descriptive words mentioned included concern, interest, managing, and leadership. Research concerning school effectiveness has consistently identified strong leadership of the school principal as significant in school improvement (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Lawrence-Lightfoot found that the majority of school principals have the capacity and the commitment to make a difference in their students' lives. The "care" and compassion of all these principals was evident in their interviews. An example from Principal "A", that while dealing with the objectionable team nickname was difficult, it was the "right thing to do": *"It was exhilarating, it was frustrating, but in the long run it was the appropriate thing to do for the healing of the school and for the students. It brought people closer together, gave people an appreciation for their differences, built trust. The whole nickname issue was*

built into the curriculum for future discussion and teaching."

The fifth theme that emerged, labeled process, alludes to the team nickname issue, not as a decision to be made (to ban or not ban), but a process to be dealt with and worked through. Staurowsky & Wilson (2001) mention this same theme in their discussion of how to change a mascot or team nickname at the university or college level. This theme was mentioned by five of the seven interview respondents.

The process, mentioned by the interview participants, included the following stages: (1) admitting there is an issue with objectionable team nickname, (2) how to deal with the issue when it arises, (3) ramifications from how the objectionable team nickname issue was dealt with, and (4) healing from those ramifications. An example of stage one includes comments by Principal "G": *"This was a process. Not only do you make a decision, you also have to make the switch. It took one year to make the decision to change. Took eight months to make the switch, which was painful as well. Those were some very trying times."*

The next stage in the process dealt with how to deal with the objectionable team nickname issue when it does arise in the high school. Examples include this comment from Principal "C": *"A committee was formed to find a new*

symbol and they choose three alternatives. The new symbol was decided upon by popular vote." Principal "E" also dealt with the objectionable team nickname issue utilizing a consensus format, *"We had our circles and we worked really hard and did the research and came up with a way we thought addressed the stereotype. A lot of people were involved in these circles."*

The ramifications from decisions that have resulted in dealing with objectionable team nicknames are ones that were dealt with in the past by the retired principals, but are also being dealt with now by the current principals. Examples include: Principal "G": *"There are ramifications from the decision. It is not easy. You are attacked. People will eventually get over it and move on, but in the meantime..."* And Principal "F": *"I know from first-hand experience this issue has long standing impact, especially when you are talking about generational. I didn't live through it, but I feel it. The decision to change the name has resulted in lost alumni donations—just now coming up on a generation that has no memories of the previous team nickname. It takes 12-15 years to cycle through. Alumni don't want to give. We cannot build a new stadium because*

of the cost. We have a fundraising drive and there is an entire segment of the alumni population that will not contribute, they will not even take my calls. The brand is damaged. You have to rebuild the identity of the students. It is an important time in their lives when their identity is being formed. There is an emotional connection to the school identity and their part in it."

The healing stage in the process theme includes the ability of the student body to work together to deal with the emotions that are attached to the team nickname issue. Principal "A": *"After many focus groups, the students learned to agree to disagree. They learned to respect each others differences, and actually found out they liked each other. None of this could have happened had we not gotten through the emotions so the healing could take place."* He also went on to elaborate on how few resources were available to the administrative staff to deal with the issue: *"There was outrage; there was anger, fights, aggression, divisiveness, and all the complications of grief. The emotional aspect of this was to be expected. There were no resources or processes in place to deal with the emotional aftermath created because of this decision."*

The experiences related by the interviewed principals uncovered five themes in the content analysis that were consistently mentioned by most. The interviews also provided a forum for the principals to have voice. It was mentioned during several interviews their feelings of isolation and their lack of guidance on how to handle the objectionable team nickname issue once it was encountered. The interviews also established that the objectionable team nickname issue is more complex and multi-dimensional than previously reported in the literature. The interview participants related how they hoped their experiences would be beneficial to others.

Quantitative Phase

Respondents

A mailing list provided by VASSP provided the names and mailing addresses of the three hundred eleven high school principals in Virginia asked to participate in the survey. It is VASSP's organizational policy to not provide email addresses. Since an electronic survey was used for data collection, it was necessary to independently find their email addresses. The email address for each principal was found in the VHSL directory and a database of names, addresses, and emails was created.

As shown in table 8, responses from participants can be divided into four distinct categories. These include respondents, principals who refused to participate, principals who were barred from participating, and those who failed to respond.

Table 9. Response Status of Survey Participants

Respondent Status	<u>N</u>	%
Respondents	115	37.0
Refused Participation	17	5.5
Barred from Participating	22	7.0
Failed to Respond	157	50.5
Total	311	100.0

The number of those who refused to participate was based upon the seventeen principals who clicked on the Survey Monkey link and spent one minute or less in the survey. Their log in and out times were provided by Survey Monkey in a consolidated report when the survey closed. A manual review of the time tables showed that these particular principals never logged on again and therefore it is assumed they refused to participant.

Twenty two principals were not allowed to participate. When the survey link was emailed to the participants,

administrators from three school divisions responded stating their policy against outside research and asked that their principals be removed from the database being utilized for this study. Their request was immediately implemented and the contact information of the twenty-two high school principals that were employed in their school divisions was deleted.

Based on the inclusion of the principals that were barred from participating, the overall response rate is 37.0%. When these principals are excluded, the survey completion rate increases to 40.0%. Using a multi-phase survey process, Dillman (2000) indicates that a response rate greater than 50% can be attained. However, the lower level of response from this survey is consistent with rates encountered by Dillman (2000) and Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1996) and is acceptable for survey research (Frankfort-Nachimias & Nachmias, 1996).

Frequency statistics were run on the demographic information provided by the survey participants. It is noted that n=105 after data cleaning and ten surveys with more than half the questions unanswered were excluded. As indicated in table 9, the majority of the participants were male (63.5%), were between the ages of 41-60 (80.0%), and were white, non-Hispanic (80.0%). The table also indicates that (80.0%) are considered tenured principals and the majority of the participants, (80.9%), have been in their

current high school between 2 and 10 years, and (66.7%) have been employed in their current school division for more than 10 years.

Table 10. Survey Participant Demographics

Variable	N (n=105)	%
Sex		
Male	73	63.5
Female	32	27.8
Age		
21-30	0	0
31-40	15	14.3
41-50	45	42.9
51-60	39	37.1
Over 60	6	5.7
Race		
White (non-Hispanic)	84	80.0
Black (non-Hispanic)	17	16.2
Other	4	3.8
Religion		
Christianity	99	94.3
Judaism	2	1.9
None	3	2.9
Other	1	0.9
Professional Status		
Tenured Principal	84	80.0
Interim Principal	17	16.2
Other	4	3.8
Years in Current High School		
1 year or less	11	10.5
2-5 years	52	49.5
6-10 years	33	31.4
More than 10 years	9	8.6
Years in Current School Division		
1 year or less	2	1.9
2-5 years	19	18.1
6-10 years	14	13.3
More than 10 years	70	66.7

Scale Reliability and Validity

The scales used in this study have been previously used by researchers as discussed in chapter two and in the variable discussion that follows. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1 with values of 0.60 to 0.70 being the lower limit of acceptable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). It was used to test reliability in previous studies (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1988; Mullen, 2005) and was used here as well. The Cronbach's alphas scores are reported following the variable discussion.

As a test of validity, Chi-square values were calculated to determine the statistical significance of responses to each of the six variables in the issue-selling model. Chi-square goodness of fit is used when there is one set of observations and one dependent variable to test if sample frequencies are the same as frequencies that occurred by chance (Bluman, 2004). The Chi-square scores are reported after the Cronbach's alpha scores following the discussion of each variable. Content validity is not a statistical test but rather an expert opinion. Content validity was achieved by agreement received during the pilot test.

Perceived organizational support

The variable perceived organizational support measures employee perceptions concerning the extent to which the organization values the employees' contributions and well-being. The variable is ordinal and was measured using an eight-item perceived organizational support scale developed by Wayne, Shore & Linden (1997). Questions 14 and 16 of the survey were reverse scored. Items were assessed using a 5-point response format where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree with lower scores representing more perceived organizational support. Cronbach's alpha =.92; P=0.0103.

Top management openness

The variable top management openness was used to assess the perceived attitudes and mindset of top management to determine if an issue will be "sold". This variable is ordinal and was assessed with a six-item measure developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). Question 23 of the survey was reverse scored. The items are rated using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with lower scores representing more perceived top management openness.

Cronbach's alpha =.93; P=0.946.

Perceived organizational norms

The variable perceived organizational norms assessed the pressure exerted on an individual to sell or not sell a controversial issue and that behavior is seen as normal and legitimate in the organization. Norms is an ordinal variable and was assessed using three items developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). The items are rated using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree. Two items were reverse scored (questions 25 and 26 on the survey) and a lower score indicated norms that favored the open discussion of objectionable team nicknames.

Cronbach's alpha =.79; P=0.015

Perceived probability of success

The variable probability of success is an ordinal variable and was determined by the confidence in selling the issue, the confidence the issue will be bought, and belief in the issue by each respondent. The scale was developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). The items were modified to ensure they were relevant to the objectionable team nickname issue. The items used a 5-point Likert-type scales where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree with a lower score indicating a higher perceived probability of success. Cronbach's alpha=.93; P=0.68.

Perceived image risk

The variable image risk is an ordinal variable and was assessed using Ashford's (1986) risk in seeking feedback scale. Six questions ask the participants' perceptions of how their images would be affected if they were to sell this issue. Question 34 of the survey was reverse scored. The scale used a 5-point response format ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree with a higher score indicating a higher level of perceived risk to one's image. Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$; $P = 0.000304$.

Willingness to sell

The dependent variable, willingness to sell was assessed by three items developed by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton (1998). The items assessed the amount of time, energy, and effort the participant was willing to spend to sell the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames. The items were rated on a 5-point scale. Cronbach's α score of 0.67; $P = 0.378$.

Analysis of Hypotheses

Correlation analysis was selected as the appropriate statistical measure for association between the variables in the hypotheses. A correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between variables and is one of the most common and useful statistical tools

(Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). It is a statistical test that is useful in "real world situations" when a measure does not need to be precise (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black, 1998). Pearson's R correlation is reported by the effect size, or r value, and can vary in magnitude from -1 to 1.

A negative linear relation is indicated with -1, a positive linear relation is indicated by 1, and 0 indicating no linear relation between the two variables. Cohen's (1988) guidelines of $r = 0.1-0.29$ as weak, $r = 0.3-0.49$ as moderate, and $r = 0.5$ or larger as strong to determine the strength of the relationship are generally accepted in social science research. A related effect size is the coefficient of determination or r -squared. This is a measure of the variance shared between the two variables (Cohen, 1988). The statistical testing was done with SPSS 10 statistical package and Excel Data Analysis.

The first research question examined the conditions that made selling a controversial issue to school division administration possible. To support this question, eight hypotheses were developed. Because each hypothesis indicated an expected direction for the relationships, two-tailed tests of significance were used (Frankfort-Nachmias &

Nachmias, 1996). The statistical tests are considered significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

The significance level of .05 was utilized on the theoretical hypotheses as a means of minimizing Type I errors. It was the goal of the hypotheses to determine the relationship and the direction of the relationship between the variables in the issue-selling model. It was believed for this research, that the consequences of a false-positive error (Type I) would be more serious than those of a false-negative (Type II) in determining a principal's willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames. The Type II error is believed to be due to the small sample size utilized in this research.

Hypothesis 1

H1: Higher perceived organizational support is positively associated with a school principal's perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools with school division administration.

The null hypothesis is perceived organizational support is not associated with a school principal's perceived probability of success.

The relationship was significant with a strong effect, ($r=.535^{**}$, $p<0.01$); as perceived organizational support scores increase, probability of success scores also increase. This finding suggests that approximately 28.06% of the change in probability of success is related to perceived organizational support.

This finding is consistent with other research on issue selling (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Mullen, 2005) that has found a positive relationship between organizational support and perceived probability of success. Based on the r value of $.535^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that perceived organizational support is positively associated with probability of success is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H2: Perceived organizational support is negatively associated with a school principal's perceived risk to their image.

The null hypothesis is perceived organizational support is not associated with image risk.

The relationship was significant with a strong effect, ($r=-.530^{**}$, $p<0.01$); as perceived organizational support scores decrease, image risk scores increase. This suggests

that approximately 28.1% of the change in image risk is related to perceived organizational support.

A moderate negative score between organizational support and image risk is consistent with Mullen's (2004) findings where individuals were less willing to raise a safety issue for fear of taunting by superiors as well as colleagues. Based on the r value of $-.530^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that perceived organizational support is negatively associated with image risk is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H3: Perceived top management openness is positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The null hypothesis is top management openness is not associated with perceived probability of success.

The relationship was significant with a strong effect, ($r=.526^{**}$, $p<0.01$); as top management scores increase, probability of success scores also increase. This suggests that approximately 27.7% of the change in probability of success is related to top management openness.

This finding is consistent with Turner's work (1980), in which it was found that employees' routinely look for signs that their superior is open to new ideas. Based on the r value of .526**, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that top management openness is positively associated with probability of success is accepted.

Hypothesis 4

H4: Perceived top management openness is negatively associated with image risk.

The null hypothesis is top management openness is not associated with image risk.

The relationship was significant with a strong effect, ($r = -.613^{**}$, $p < 0.01$); as top management scores decrease, image risk scores increase. This suggests that approximately 37.6% of the change in image risk is related to top management openness.

This finding is consistent with the organizational dissent research done by Meyerson & Scully (1995) that found employees' are unwilling to alter the status quo in their organization for fear of being labeled as negative or unwilling to be team players. Based on the r value of $-.613^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that top management openness is negatively associated with image risk is accepted.

Hypothesis 5

H5: Perceived organizational norms are positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The null hypothesis is perceived organizational norms are not associated with a school principal's perceived probability of success.

The relationship was significant with a moderate effect, ($r=.396^{**}$, $p<0.01$); as perceived organizational norms scores increase, probability of success scores also increase. This suggests that approximately 15.7% of the change in probability of success is related to perceived organizational norms.

This finding is consistent with research done by Ashford & Northcraft, (1992) that found that clear guidelines within the organizational culture allowed the employee to decide what was appropriate given the activity. When expectations are consistent and clear, an employee would be more willing to raise an unpopular issue. Based on the r value of $.396^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that organizational norms are positively associated with probability of success is accepted.

Hypothesis 6

H6: Perceived organizational norms are negatively associated with the school principals' perceived image risk.

The null hypothesis is perceived organizational norms are not associated with image risk.

The relationship was significant with a strong effect, ($r = -.715^{**}$, $p < 0.01$); as perceived organizational norms scores decrease, image risk scores increase. This suggests that approximately 51.1% of the change in image risk is related to perceived organizational norms.

This finding is consistent with research done by Mullen, (2004) that found employees reported they were reluctant about raising a safety concern for fear of being labeled as "not tough enough". Based on the r value of $-.715^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that organizational norms are negatively associated with image risk is accepted.

Hypothesis 7

H7: School principals' perceptions of the probability of success are positively associated with their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The null hypothesis is probability of success is not associated with willingness to sell.

The relationship was significant with a moderate effect, ($r=.320^{**}$, $p<0.01$); as perceived probability of success scores increase, willingness scores also increase. This suggests that approximately 10.2% of the change in willingness to sell is related to perceived probability of success.

This finding is consistent with research done by Vroom (1964) on expectancy theory that suggests that individuals will adopt behaviors that will result in the probability of a positive outcome. Based on the r value of $.320^{**}$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that probability of success is positively associated with willingness to raise and promote the objectionable team nickname issue is accepted.

Hypothesis 8

H8: School principals' perceptions of image risk are negatively related to their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The null hypothesis is image risk is not associated with a school principal's willingness to sell the banning of

objectionable team nicknames issue to school division administration.

The relationship was significant with a low effect, ($r = -.229^*$, $p < 0.05$). As image risk scores increase, willingness scores decrease. This suggests that approximately 5.2% of the change in willingness to sell is related to image risk.

This finding is consistent with Leary & Kowalski's (1990) research that peer pressure, friendship, acceptance, and the need for power were important reasons for an individual to protect their image in the organization. Based on the r value of $-.229^*$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that image risk is negatively associated with willingness to raise and promote the objectionable team nickname issue is accepted.

Table 11 provides a summary of the correlation analysis conducted on the dependent variable, willingness to sell.

Table 11. Summary of Correlation Analysis on Willingness

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. POS	–					
2. TMO	.807**	–				
3. NORMS	.512**	.682**	–			
4. SUCCESS	.535**	.526**	.396**	–		
5. IMAGE	-.530**	-.613**	-.715**	-.369**	–	
6. WILLING	.097	.115	.068	.327**	-.092	–
Mean	15.40	12.27	6.63	6.71	23.28	3.71
Standard Deviation	5.64	4.74	2.33	2.57	2.89	1.36
Range	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

(n=105). **p<.01 (two-tailed).

The bivariate correlation analysis conducted for hypotheses testing for research question one resulted in low to strong associations for each variable. All hypotheses were accepted and the null hypotheses were rejected.

In order to determine if probability of success and image risk are mediating variables, Baron & Kenny (1986) state three conditions must be met: (1) variations in the levels of organizational support, top management openness,

and norms significantly account for the variations in probability of success and image risk; (2) variations in probability of success and image risk significantly account for variances in willing to sell; (3) when conditions 1 and 2 are controlled, a previously significant relationship between organizational support, top management openness, norms and willing to sell is no longer significant, with the strongest indicator of (3) is zero.

As indicated in table 11, the r-value between perceived organizational support, top management openness, and organizational norms to willingness to sell are 0.097, 0.115, and 0.068 respectively. When those same variables pass through probability of success and image risk to arrive at willingness to sell, the relationship scores increase significantly to 0.320** and -0.229* respectively.

Therefore, the variables of probability of success and image risk are mediating variables in the issue selling model. Figure 5 illustrates the independent variables and the direction and strength of their relationship to the dependent variable of willingness to sell. This is a significant finding to determine that probability of success (.327**) and image risk (-.092) are strong indicators and directional relationship of a principal's willingness to sell an issue to their superior. A closer examination of the results also indicates that the variable norms explains (-.715**) or 70% of the variance in the image risk variable

and could be considered a threat to multicollinearity. However, since multicollinearity does not reduce the predictive power or reliability of the model as a whole, this was determined not to be an issue (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

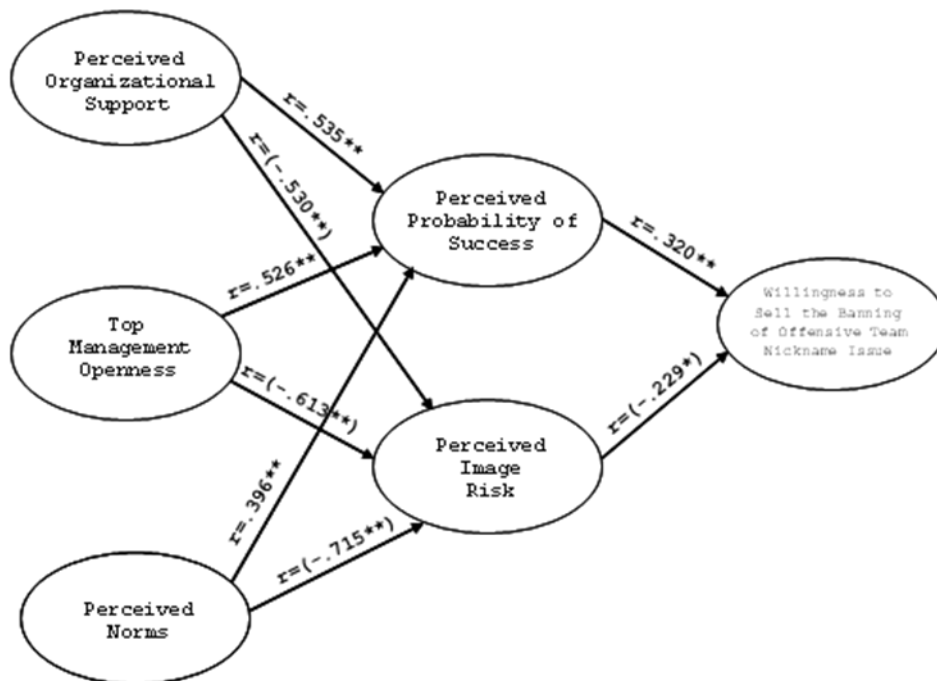


Figure 5. Issue Selling Model with r-values.

Legend:

- (+) indicates a positive relationship
- (-) indicates a negative relationship

The second research question examined if the willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue was perceived differently between principals whose schools had objectionable team nicknames and those that do not. A manual review was performed on the answers given by the ninety-five respondents who answered the survey question, *Is the team nickname at your current school one that you would consider as being sensitive or offensive to others?* Ninety percent reported their team nicknames were not offensive (n=85). A tally of the actual team nicknames reported determined that 17.9%, (n=17) were considered objectionable and 82.1%, (n=78) were not. As defined in chapters one and three, an objectionable team nickname is one with either American Indian, Southern heritage/Confederate, sexist, or satanic connotations.

To support the research question, hypothesis nine was developed.

H9: *School principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames will report less perceived willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames than those principals whose schools do not have objectionable team nicknames to their school division administration.*

The null hypothesis is there is no difference in willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team

nicknames to school division administration between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not.

Since the hypothesis addressed the difference between two groups, a t-test was selected as an appropriate statistical test. Table 12 illustrates the results of the t-test.

Table 12. t-test: Two Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<u>OBJ</u>	<u>Non-OBJ</u>
Observations	17	78
Mean	8.7	7.5
Variance	2.2	4.7
Hypothesized Mean		
t value	2.7	
P(T<=t)one-tail	0.005	

Since $p < \alpha$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There appears to be a difference between high school principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not in their willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames. This is consistent with Seo & Creed's (2002) study where a number of principals were unwilling to "rock the boat" when confronted with controversial issues due to past encounters with hostile and abusive parents. The finding in this study supports the hypothesis that there is a difference between principals

whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those whose schools that do not in their willingness to sell or raise the objectionable team nickname issue.

Analysis of the Issue Selling Model

There were advantages to using correlation analysis to test the hypotheses related to the issue selling model. First, it showed the strength of the relationships between the variables in the model. Second, since it had values between 0 and 1, it was an important determinant for any multicollinearity issues. Multicollinearity exists when a correlation coefficient between two independent variables is greater than .90 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). As illustrated in table 11, there were no correlation coefficients greater than .90.

However, there is a disadvantage to using correlation analysis as the only statistical test. Since correlation analysis is symmetrical, it will not provide evidence of causation and therefore it was deemed appropriate to do additional statistical testing. Ordinary least squares regression was selected because it allows for more robust findings in determining the relationship between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Ordinary least squares regression is used to analyze the influence perceived organizational support, top management openness, organizational norms,

perceived probability of success, and image risk have on willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue.

As shown in table 13, the Multiple R for the issue selling model is .344. This number indicates the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. R^2 indicates the explanatory power of the regression model. Since R^2 equals .118, almost 12 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, willingness to sell, is explained by the independent variables.

Table 13. Summary of Regression Analysis on Willingness

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
WILLINGNESS	7.47	3.20	—	2.34	0.21
POS	-4.79E-02	.063	-.126	-.759	.45
TMO	1.752E-02	.086	.039	.204	.839
NORMS	-7.96E-02	.140	-.087	-.570	.570
SUCCESS	.323	.095	.389	3.41	.001
IMAGE	-3.98E-02	.104	-.054	-.383	.703
R^2		.12			2.06 (SE)
<i>F</i>		2.66			.027 (Sig.)

The ANOVA table determines whether the model is statistically significant at the .05 level. The F-score and its significance are examined. The score does not tell how powerful the model is, but instead, the overall significance of the issue selling model. In this model, the F score is 2.661 with a significance of .027. There is statistical significance, but it is very small.

The Coefficients of the issue selling model are examined as well. The significance of each independent variable should be statistically significant at the .05 level within the model. Top management openness, organizational norms, and image risk met the criteria. Perceived organizational support, at .45 was very close.

The unstandardized coefficients column gives the parameter values for projections. The constant is the Y-value parameter for the equation. The constant value for the issue selling model is 7.472. The slope and direction of the independent variables are listed below the constant. The regression equation is $Y = b^2 \cdot x_1 + b_2 \cdot x_2 = c$; where Y is the dependent variable, the b's are the regression coefficients for the corresponding x (independent) variables, and c is the constant or intercept.

The reporting of the standardized coefficients removed units so one can make equal comparisons among the independent variables. The Beta score of .389 for perceived

probability of success appears to have the most significant impact on the willingness to sell variable.

The ordinary least squares regression analysis resulted in one independent variable, probability of success, having the greatest impact on a principal's willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue. The issue selling model and the survey instrument utilized were borrowed from previous research done by Mullen (2005). However, for this study the willingness to sell variable was modified to reflect a more quantified selection of answers.

Past studies reflected a mixture of results concerning the participants' willingness to sell variable and this study set out to try to define what could have been perceived to be ambiguity in answer selections. For example, rather than have a selection of answers that ranged from "not at all" to "a great deal" on a four-point Likert scale, this study utilized quantifiable answers.

The willingness to sell variable included three measures, time, effort, and involvement. The revised selections for the time measure included "nothing at all, hours, day, week, as long as it takes". The revised selections for the effort measure included "nothing at all, research the issue, discuss the issue with other principals, make an appointment to discuss the issue with supervisor, or write a proposal/action plan". The revised selections for

the involvement issue included "nothing at all, attend a meeting concerning this issue, discuss this issue with a colleague, sign a petition, or join a committee".

This study focused on the conditions that would either enable or inhibit a high school principal to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames to their school division administration. The willingness to sell decision resulted in a binary dependent variable suited for analysis through logistic regression (Hair, Anderson, Tatum, & Black, 1998).

Logistic regression analysis was selected as appropriate for additional statistical testing for two reasons. First, was the ability to collapse the answers for the willingness to sell variable. Second, logistic regression could answer questions concerning overall model evaluation, statistical testing of individual predictors, goodness-of-fit statistics, and validations of predicted probabilities (Peng, Lee, & Ingersoll, 2002).

The willingness to sell variable became binary after the measures for time, effort, and involvement were converted to a scale of 0 and 1, with 0 being the equivalent of "unwilling" and 1 being the equivalent of "willing" when anything but "nothing" was selected as a response on the survey. Missing data was not an issue since surveys that had more than half the answers missing to core questions were deemed unusable (n=10) from survey participants.

Analysis of the logistic regression function is based on the likelihood of an event occurring or not occurring. It applies maximum likelihood estimation after transforming the dependent variable into a logit variable. In other words, logistic regression estimates the odds of a principal's willingness to sell based on time, effort, and involvement, all things being equal.

A series of logistic regressions were conducted for each of the questions (time, effort, involvement) used to measure willingness to sell. The results of each of the logistic regressions produced the Model chi-square value, R^2 value, and a summary of the variables in the equation.

The Model chi-square is a statistical test that all of the terms in the model are zero. A low significance is interpreted as the set of variables improves the prediction of the log odds (Advanced Techniques).

R^2 explains the amount of variance in the model. Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 is preferred to the Cox and Snell value because it can achieve a maximum value of one (Advanced Techniques).

The summary for the variables in the equation provides information much like a regression output table except the model is based in terms of the odds ratio or logit. The B coefficient is the effect of a one-unit change in an independent variable on the log odds. The Wald statistic

provides the level of significance for the variable (Field, 2000). Exp(B) provides the odds of having an event occur or not occur based on a unit change in the explanatory variable, all other things being equal (Hair, Anderson, Tatum, & Black, 1998).

As shown in table 14, each of the measures had a low significance and it can be concluded that the set of independent variables improves the prediction of the log odds. The table also illustrates that the time measure accounts for almost 36 percent of the variance while effort accounts for only 3 percent of the variance in the issue selling model.

Table 14. Logistic Regression Model Fit Results

Measure	Model chi-square(sig.)	df	R ² (Nagel)
Time	31.56(.000)	5	.359
Effort	1.917(.860)	5	.029
Involvement	7.627(.178)	5	.168

The model summary values seen in table 15, perceived probability of success and image risk have the most significant impact on a principal's willingness to spend time on the issue of objectionable team nicknames. For example, a principal is 1.5 times more likely to invest the

time to sell an issue when they perceive their image will not be negatively impacted if they were to do so.

Table 15.

Logistic Regression Predicting Willingness Based on Time

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
POS	.05	.07	.52	1	.47	1.06
TMO	.06	.10	.33	1	.57	1.06
NORMS	.44	.20	4.94	1	.03	1.55
Success	-.57	.15	15.19	1	.00	.57
Image	.40	.14	8.44	1	.00	1.50
Constant	-9.19	4.16	4.87	1	.03	.00
Percent correctly predicted=81.9%						
N=105						

As shown in table 16, perceived probability of success and image risk have greatest amount of influence on the effort a high school principal is willing to invest on the team nickname issue, all other things being equal. However, the difference between a principal's time and their effort in their willingness to sell an issue is significantly different. This significance leads one to believe there is a difference between a principal's actual behavior and their ideal behavior when dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. For example, on the survey 38 percent of the principal's indicated they were willing ``to spend as

much time as it takes'' to deal with the objectionable team nickname issue, (n=40); yet 53.3 percent (n=56) reported they were unwilling to invest any effort on the issue.

Table 16.

Logistic Regression Predicting Willingness Based on Effort

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
POS	-.01	.08	.03	1	.87	.99
TMO	-.05	.11	.20	1	.66	.95
NORMS	-.09	.19	.23	1	.63	.92
Success	-.04	.13	1.00	1	.76	.96
Image	-.13	.13	1.01	1	.32	.88
Constant	3.26	4.09	.64	1	.43	26.00

Percent correctly predicted=81.0%, N=105

The model summary values seen in table 17, perceived organizational support, probability of success and image risk have the most significant impact on a principal's willingness to become involved with the objectionable team nickname issue. This finding is interesting since almost 31 percent (n=33) of the principals reported the team nickname issue had been brought to their attention in the past three years by either a student (n=4), a parent (n=9), a teacher (n=5), or colleague (n=15) yet 90.1 percent (n=95) of the principals reported they had done ``nothing'' concerning the objectionable team nickname issue in the past twelve months.

Table 17. Logistic Regression Predicting Willingness
Based on Involvement

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
POS	-.11	.10	1.14	1	.29	.90
TMO	.08	.15	.30	1	.58	1.08
NORMS	.07	.24	.09	1	.77	1.08
Success	.09	.18	1.23	1	.63	1.09
Image	-.28	.22	1.67	1	.20	.75
Constant	3.32	6.34	.28	1	.60	27.76

Percent correctly predicted=92.4%

N=105

These models suggest that school principal's who perceive they have a greater probability of success and perceive their image will not be impacted negatively, are more likely to respond to that influence by their willingness to raise or sell a controversial issue. However, those principals who do not have those perceptions most likely are not willing to sell/raise a controversial issue with their superior. This finding is important because it demonstrates that the barriers that prevent principals from speaking up can be identified and addressed. The findings from these models also signify these particular principals do not find the objectionable team nickname issue one of importance at the time of the survey. This finding is consistent with 42.9 percent (n=45) of the school principals reporting this issue was "not important" to

them as reported in question 39. In addition on question 40, when asked to rank fictional objectionable team nicknames on a scale of 1 (very objectionable) to 5 (not objectionable at all), the average score for the most objectionable nicknames (Yellow Devils, Redskins, Yanks, and Bulls) was 3.96 as reported by 85 percent (n=89) of the principals. In combination, these findings indicate the team nickname issue was not an "issue" for these principals at the time they participated in the survey.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the research answered both research questions. Question one, there are several factors that influence a school principal's willingness to sell or raise the issue of objectionable team nicknames to school district administration. Correlation analysis identified significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The use of ordinary least squares regression analysis performed a more robust statistical testing of the data and resulted in two variables that significantly influenced the willingness to sell variable. Perceived probability of success and image risk were found to be the more significant influences in relation to a principal's willingness to sell a controversial issue.

Question two, t-test analysis identified there is a difference between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames versus those that do not in their willingness to raise the objectionable team nickname issue to their superiors.

Logistic regression was utilized as a test to determine the likelihood a principal was willing to sell a controversial issue based on their time, effort, and involvement investment. The findings suggest the principals are willing to invest the time in a controversial issue but based on their responses; it was unlikely they would expend a lot of effort or become too involved with the objectionable team nick name issue.

While these findings appear to be contradictory, they can certainly be explained. For example during the interview process, it was mentioned by Principal A "that issues needed to be put into perspective and dealt with accordingly". It is possible that the objectionable team nickname issue was not an issue at the time of the survey or perhaps they were more pressing issues that warranted the principals' efforts and involvement at the time.

The resulting themes that emerged from the interview data addressed "team nick names as stereotypes" and the issue of objectionable team nicknames being used as an opportunity for "teaching moments" rather than a "decision

being forced down our throats". The data from the interviews also related how emotional and difficult an experience in dealing with objectionable team nicknames can be. The findings suggest that dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue was an experience that was difficult for all parties concerned, especially the students, and ramifications from the decisions made at the time can be felt for years.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes and discusses the research project. Recommendations are provided concerning future research. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of this study for public policy and administration.

Significance of the Study

This study has provided administrators a clearer understanding to some of the barriers to change in the organization. In particular, this study examined the situational factors involved in "selling" a controversial or emotionally charged issue by high school principals to their superior within the school division.

As public institutions, schools have the legal, moral, ethical, and fiduciary responsibility to address the needs of all students and to provide an environment or culture that is conducive to learning (Pewewardy, 1999; Fiore, 2001). A review of the literature found the objectionable depiction of a team mascot or team nickname can lead to an environment of hostility and hatred in a school. The

interviews conducted for this study with retired principals that had experience in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue verified those assertions.

The premise of the issue-selling process is of individuals bringing ideas and concerns together in order to focus others' attention and actions on an issue important to them (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998). The idea is to bring an issue, such as objectionable team nicknames, to the attention of school division administration before it becomes an emotional or legal problem. Problems are usually more difficult and costly to deal with than issues (Bansal, 2003). A school system is constantly changing; therefore, understanding the barriers to change is important.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the issue-selling literature by testing the issue-selling model on individuals employed in a public institution. In particular, high school principals employed in the public school system contributed to this inquiry. The public school system has a hierarchical chain-of-command system in place that too often seems to "perpetuate the *status quo* by rewarding conformity, stability, and complacency rather than transformational behaviors" (Cline & Necochea, 2000, p. 152).

This study is particularly significant because it examines the situational factors that may contribute to

employee silence or the lack of willingness to initiate the issue-selling process when confronted with an emotionally charged issue to their superiors. The issue-selling research has not addressed the culture and controls that are unique to a public school system. The public school system includes a high degree of external control, high levels of bureaucratic control and centralization (Aiken & Hage (1971) and Pierce & Delbecq (1977)).

Summary of Literature Review

This research project involved the review of three streams of literature. These included issue selling, the role of the high school principal in the public school system, and objectionable team nicknames.

Issue Selling

The concept of personnel other than top management bringing forth issues of significance to the organization is important and worthy of closer examination (Ansoff, 1980). It is important to allow others to bring forth issues because top management may not be aware of issues that are brewing beneath the surface or are impacted by environmental factors outside of their respective areas of expertise and authority. Managerial time and attention are scarce resources (Pfeffer, 1994) and managers must deal with a

great deal of complexity, unknown events, and complex human interactions (Greve & Taylor, 2000) as they strive to adhere to the organization's mission and remain competitive.

When managers or administrators engage in a discussion concerning issues and challenges facing an organization and the future, many times some voices are heard above others (Hazen, 1993). When organizations listen to only select voices, it limits itself for discovering alternative ways for dealing with issues and conflict. It also limits itself to the amount and kind of information received by leaving out an important segment of its personnel. It is necessary for organizations to understand the control factors that are in place that lead to the silence exhibited in some members' voices or the reason they are unwilling to bring an issue to the table for discussion.

One reason organizational members may remain silent is due to what researchers have termed the 'mum effect' (Rosen & Tesser, 1970, Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Research on the mum effect has shown that individuals have a reluctance to share negative or controversial information with their superiors because of the discomfort (Conlee & Tesser, 1973) or fear of negative consequences (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). The hierarchical relationship between subordinate and supervisor appears to intensify the mum effect. Festinger (1954) observed that structured

hierarchies in organizations automatically constrain communications between lower-status members and those in supervisory positions. A public school system, with its hierarchical structure and bureaucracy, is similar to Festinger's observation.

Issue-selling research has focused on middle managers' attempts to get the attention of supervisors and top managers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993) and has identified a set of social and organizational factors that affect individuals' willingness to sell issues such as organizational support, top management openness, and organizational norms (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998). These factors mediate the variables of probability of success and image risk to affect individuals' willingness to sell an issue.

Empirical research and testing using Dutton & Ashford's conceptual framework of issue selling has found the willingness to sell an issue increases with higher perceived favorability of the organizational context (organizational support, top management openness, or organizational norms), higher perceived probability of successfully selling that issue, and lower perceived image risk (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba, 1997; Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Bansal, 2003). The focus of past research as

well as this current project was on the "selling of issues as opposed to solutions" (Dutton & Ashford, 1993, p.398).

The issue selling literature has not addressed the issue sellers' situated experience (Howard-Grenville, 2007). The theory of situated experience "requires coordination and activities with others within the organization and requires negotiation through interactions" (Bond-Robinson & Stucky, 2005), such as decisions and activities that occur within a public school division. Even fewer studies have addressed the power and resistance issue sellers must encounter in organizational contexts (Howard-Grenville, 2007). There was the need to study how the situated experience of individuals in centralized, top-down decision-making organizations may affect individuals' willingness to sell an issue within the type of organizational structure and culture that is found in the public school system.

Role of the School Principal

The role of the school principal in the public school system was important for this line of inquiry. The school principal is the one with their "finger on the pulse" of their school and are more knowledgeable about issues needing to be addressed (Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

The school principal is the one individual in the school primarily responsible for "defining the school's vision and articulating the ideological stance" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p.323). Dr. Lawrence-Lightfoot also surmises the principal is "the voice, the mouthpiece of the institution and it is his job to communicate with various constituencies". The school principal is also the one who is responsible and held legally accountable for what occurs in their respective schools (Cushman, 1992).

The principal "sets the boundaries between the school and community, and must negotiate with the supervisor and the school board" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 323). The resulting observation according to Llamas & Serrat (2002) is "principals have a bridging role between educational imperatives, market forces, political hegemony, and managerial complexity" (p. 304). A principal has the ability to lead his or her school to a greater understanding of diversity and promote social justice (Hoff, Yoder, & Hoff, 2006). According to Dantley & Tillman (2006), discussions about social justice in the education arena have "historically addressed issues including race, diversity, marginalization, morality, gender, and spirituality" (p. 17).

The process and dynamics that would enable school principals to "sell" an issue of importance upward in an organization that is known for being top down regarding communications and feedback is important to understand. The perceptions of the school principal in this study are important because they are the individuals to whom others turn to for support when confronted with what Banks (2003, p. 2) has called "the deepening ethnic texture of contemporary schools". The role of the school principal has become more complex as society is ever changing and principals must have their "fingers on the pulse" of the culture around them. The issue of objectionable team nicknames used in public high schools and school principals as the leader of those schools is considered appropriate for this study.

Objectionable Team Nicknames

The issue of objectionable team nicknames being used in public high schools in Virginia was examined for this project. The use of nicknames as a symbol representing athletic teams and students is a tradition that began at Yale University in 1718 (Franks, 1982). It is a common practice used to "achieve solidarity and community" within the school (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). School team nicknames may be used to unite, but research suggests that school

nicknames also have the power to divide (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Eitzen, 1999; Eitzen & Zinn, 2001; Ward, 2004).

The nicknames selected and adopted by an educational institution may need to be reevaluated periodically due to an increased sensitivity to ethnicity, gender, group differences, and a greater understanding of cultural history in our society (Fuller & Manning, 1987; Smith, 1997; Eitzen, 1999; Ward, 2004). Sports team nicknames, as identifying symbols used by educational institutions, have become a "highly visible and sometimes controversial reflection of American culture" (Fuller & Manning, 1987, p. 61). The team nickname of a particular school is one that is used to identify the entire student population (Ward, 2004). It is often one of great pride and evokes loyalty to the alma mater by many students long after graduation (Black, 2002; Ward, 2004).

Some team nicknames and imagery may evoke pride and loyalty, while others can be considered controversial and objectionable. There are team nicknames being used in Virginia public high schools that may be considered objectionable because they may "dismiss, differentiate, demean, and trivialize marginalized groups such as American Indians (for the use of American Indian imagery), African-Americans (for the use of Southern heritage or Confederate imagery), and women (for the use of sexist terms)" (Eitzen &

Zinn, 2001, p. 49). Satanic nicknames were included because of the controversial nature in religious communities as cited in popular press articles.

There was a need to further examine the perception of objectionable team nicknames and their impact on public school systems. The literature has addressed the objectionable team nickname issue as a decision (to ban or not ban) rather than as the complex process that it is.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to build on existing research and determine under what conditions are public high school principals more or less willing to "sell" the issue of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to their school division administration. Prior research has indicated that perceived organizational support, top management openness, probability of success, and image risk significantly determine the likelihood of a principal's willingness to sell an issue (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Mullen, 2005). This study used a survey instrument to collect information concerning school principals' perceptions concerning the objectionable team nickname issue. Personal interviews were conducted with retired and current principals to refine the survey

instrument and capture first-hand experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue.

Research Questions

This study was designed to test an issue-selling model and to answer the following questions:

- 1) Under what conditions will high school principals "sell" the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools to their school division administration?
- 2) Is the issue of selling the banning of objectionable team nicknames in public high schools perceived differently between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not?

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data gathered for this research was obtained from seven personal interviews with retired and current high school principals and from 105 usable surveys submitted by current public high school principals in Virginia. The interview participants were selected through purposeful sampling in order to get at the personal experiences of individuals that had dealt with the objectionable team nickname issue. The survey was conducted using a

questionnaire sent electronically to the entire population of 311 current high school principals in Virginia.

The interview guide used for the personal interviews was designed as a tool to help refine the survey questions. The guide began with a request for participants to share their experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue and eleven questions addressing the factors that enabled or inhibited them in addressing the issue with their school division administration. The survey instrument included 43 questions to measure demographic information and perceptions of organizational support, top management openness, organizational norms, probability of success, and image risk in relation to willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue to school division administration. The questions were modified from those used by Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton's (1998) study concerning gender-equity issues in the workplace and Mullen's (2005) study concerning workplace safety issues.

Data was recorded using both ordinal and nominal scales with the majority of the responses based on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability was determined by calculation of Cronbach's alpha. All scales achieved an alpha score of at least 0.60.

Data Analysis

Initial analysis included the review of response statistics. The personal interviews achieved a response rate of 100 percent. In addition, two principals were added to the interview population after commenting on the electronic survey. The electronic survey achieved a response rate of 37.0 percent, excluding principals who were prevented from participating by their school division administration.

Descriptive statistics were reviewed for all interviews and completed surveys. This included analysis of demographic information and variable scales through calculation of mean scores, standard deviations, and range of scores.

Content analysis was performed on the interview data using an approach outlined by Marshall & Rossman (1995) and Berg (2007). The process included the specification of categories through coding and applying the same coding rules to each interview. The coding process included open coding, coding frames, and axial coding.

Statistical testing included correlation analysis, ordinary least squares regression, and logistic regression. The correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and effect of the relationships of the variables in the issue selling model. Because the hypotheses indicate an

expected direction for the relationships, one-tailed tests of significance were used (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) and results were considered significant at $p \leq 0.05$. Ordinary least squares regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between several independent variables and the one dependent variable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The logistic regression analysis was used to predict the probability of issue selling occurring by the school principals.

Hypothesis Testing

Nine hypotheses were developed to test the research questions. These included:

H1: Higher perceived organizational support is positively associated with a school principal's perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools with school division administration.

The relationship was found to be statistically significant with a strong effect, ($r = .535^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As the principals' perceived organizational support increased, their probability of success scores also increased. This finding is consistent with other research on issue selling (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton,

1998; Mullen, 2005) that has found a positive relationship between organizational support and perceived probability of success.

H2: Perceived organizational support is negatively associated with a school principal's perceived risk to their image.

The relationship was statistically significant with a strong effect, ($r = -.530^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As principals' perceived organizational support decreased, the risk to their image scores increased. A negative score between organizational support and image risk is consistent with Mullen's (2004) findings where individuals were less willing to raise a safety issue for fear of taunting by their superiors and colleagues.

H3: Perceived top management openness is positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The relationship was statistically significant with a strong effect, ($r = .526^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As the principals' top management scores increased, their probability of success scores also increased. This finding

is consistent with Turner's work (1980), in which it was found that employees' routinely look for signs that their superior is open to new ideas.

H4: Perceived top management openness is negatively associated with image risk.

The relationship was statistically significant with a strong effect, ($r = -.613^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As principals' top management scores decreased, the risk to their image scores increased. This finding is consistent with the organizational dissent research done by Meyerson & Scully (1995) that found employees are unwilling to alter the status quo in their organization for fear of being labeled as negative or unwilling to be team players.

H5: Perceived organizational norms are positively associated with the school principals' perceived probability of successfully "selling" the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The relationship was statistically significant with a moderate effect, ($r = .396^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As the principals' perceived organizational norms scores increased, their probability of success scores also increased. This finding is consistent with research done by Ashford &

Northcraft, (1992) that found that clear guidelines within the organizational culture allowed the employee to decide what was appropriate given the activity. When expectations are consistent and clear, an employee would be more willing to raise an unpopular issue.

H6: Perceived organizational norms are negatively associated with the school principals' perceived image risk.

The relationship was statistically significant with a strong effect, ($r = -.715^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As the principals' perceived organizational norms scores decreased, their image risk scores increased. This finding is consistent with research done by Mullen, (2004) that found employees reported they were reluctant about raising a safety concern for fear of being labeled as "not tough enough".

H7: School principals' perceptions of the probability of success are positively associated with their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The relationship was statistically significant with a moderate effect, ($r = .327^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, two-tailed). As the principals' perceived probability of success scores

increased, their willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname issue scores increased as well. This finding is consistent with research done by Vroom (1964) on expectancy theory that suggests individuals will adopt behaviors that result in a positive outcome.

H8: School principals' perceptions of image risk are negatively related to their willingness to raise and promote the issue of banning the continued use of objectionable team nicknames in high schools to school division administration.

The relationship was statistically significant with a low effect, ($r = -.092$, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed). As the principals' risk to their image scores increased, their willingness to sell scores decreased. This finding is consistent with Leary & Kowalski's (1990) research that peer pressure, friendship, acceptance, and the need for power were important reasons for an individual to protect their image in the organization and they were unwilling to take risks.

H9: School principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames will report less perceived willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames than those principals whose schools do not have objectionable team nicknames to their school division administration.

A t-test was selected as an appropriate statistical test since the hypothesis addressed the difference between two groups. Since $p < \alpha$, there is a difference between high school principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames and those that do not in their willingness to sell the issue of objectionable team nicknames but the difference is so small that it is not considered statistically significant. The finding is consistent with Seo & Creed's (2002) study where principals were unwilling to "rock the boat" when confronted with controversial issues. Yet, this finding is so small, another possibility must be considered. For example, a manual review of the VHSL directory determined there were over twenty percent of the high schools in Virginia using objectionable team nicknames. Yet in the survey responses, less than 15 percent of the school principals ($n=17$) felt the team nickname at their high school was objectionable. It could be argued that there were not enough principals with objectionable team nicknames responding to the question.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the research answer both research questions. Question one, there are several factors that influence a school principal's willingness to sell or raise the issue of objectionable team nicknames to school district

administration. Correlation analysis identified significant relationships between perceived organizational support, top management openness, perceived organizational norms, perceived probability of success, and image risk to willingness to sell. The use of regression analysis identified perceived probability of success and image risk had the greatest significant impact on a school principal's willingness to sell the objectionable team nickname to their school division administration. Logistic regression analysis determined school principals were 1.5 times as likely to spend time on the objectionable team nickname issue as they were to expending effort or becoming involved with the issue as defined in this study.

Question two, t-test analysis identified there is a difference between principals whose schools have objectionable team nicknames versus those that do not in their willingness to raise the objectionable team nickname issue to their superiors. The sample of those with objectionable team nicknames was small yet statistically significant.

The resulting themes that emerged from the interview data particularly addressed "team nick names as stereotypes" and the issue of objectionable team nicknames being used as an opportunity for "teaching moments" rather than a "decision being forced down our throats". Principal "F"

felt: *"You have to rebuild the identity of the students. It is an important time in their lives, when their identity is being formed. There is an emotional connection to the school identity and their part in it."*

The statements from the interviews are consistent with Dutton and Ashford's (1993) initial research that issue selling is only the beginning step in a process to deal with issues in an organization dealing with change.

Contributions for Current Theory

This research is consistent with current theory regarding issue selling (Mullen, 2005). Individuals are more willing to sell an issue when their perceived probability of success is increased and the risk to their image within the organization is decreased. In order to increase their probability of success and decrease their image risk, individuals are most likely going to be influenced by the perceived amount of support they receive from the organization, how open minded their direct superior is, and if the norms in the culture of the organization are receptive to change and new ideas.

This research is the only known study using data from individuals in a hierarchical and strongly bureaucratic public institution to test the issue-selling model devised

by Ashford & Dutton (1993). This study addresses a specific population in a public institution and allows for a more detailed examination of the perceptions of high school principals in relation to a controversial issue. The findings are significant because they support prior issue-selling model research that found significant influence from probability of success and one's image risk in the organization upon a willingness to raise or sell an issue to a superior (Mullen, 2005).

In addition, this study addresses how important the culture of the public school system is when addressing controversial issues such as objectionable team nicknames. According to Vergari (2000), public schools not only help students acquire knowledge, but also help in socializing students based on society's norms and values and the policies and norms enforced by the school division.

Another significant finding is a school principal's appearance of unwillingness to expend an effort or become involved in the objectionable team nickname issue. This finding could be due to the individual principal's definition of what an objectionable team nickname is and how this study defined objectionable. Less than 15 percent (n=17) of the principals responding felt their school had an objectionable team nickname, while this researcher found over 20 percent did (n=69). This finding could also be due

to how the responses were defined and worded in the survey. For example, the question regarding "involvement" for the willingness to sell variable was defined using a 12-month timeframe. The other two measures for the willingness variable did not. This is an area that needs to be addressed in future research.

Finally, this study emphasized how complex the objectionable team nickname issue is and provides a guideline for school principals on what to expect when the issue arises. This is important for understanding because dealing with an offensive issue may require doing damage control and the use of valuable and scarce resources. This contribution would not have been possible without the mixed-method research design utilized for this study. While all data can be considered information, it is the face-to-face interviews utilized in this study that contributed to understanding the depth and complexity of the objectionable team nickname issue that was not captured in the survey data.

Limitations

All research projects have limitations and the current project had them as well. First, the population sample was drawn from high school principals in Virginia. This limits

the ability to generalize research results to high school principals outside of Virginia.

Second, the interviews were based on purposeful sampling from print media headlines. The interviewed principals overwhelmingly felt that the media helped fuel the negative aspects of dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. Principal "A" stated: *"A small incident at school that didn't go away. Press really ran with this, they were all over the school, in the parking lot, in the school. What began as an issue in-house, turned into a major event. The newspaper did not report that the students on these two opposing sides were friends in school. They became 'enemies' only when the cameras were rolling. It was a very small group that stirred the pot. They held a rally and garnered lots of press. The newspaper really fueled it."*

The data obtained from those interviews does not reflect the possibility and probability of instances when school principals dealt with the objectionable team nickname issue with media influence and it was not a negative experience.

Third, the survey is based on a sample of self-selected principals within self-selected school divisions. The survey was sent to all 311 public high school principals

in Virginia. While significant efforts were made to increase survey participation, only 37.0% of those contacted completed the survey. Therefore, only responses from high school principals who volunteered to participate were available. This presents the potential for response bias. While the potential for bias is possible, it is important to acknowledge and respect the policies of school divisions not to allow their principals to participate in research. In addition, the self-selection to participate by principals resulted in a small sample size. The resulting small sample size lends itself to the possibility of Type I and Type II errors occurring.

Fourth, the survey data was cross-sectional in nature. It was gathered at and reflects one point in time. The design of this research project limited the ability to determine if there were on-going concerns in the administrative life of the school principals that were not considered but could have been relevant. The limitations of the present study are the basis for recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a number of areas for consideration for future research. First, this research concentrated on a population of public high school principals in Virginia.

The choice to use only one state limits generalizing the findings to principals in only one state. It is recommended that future research examine principals in other states or to create a nationally representative sample of public high school principals to help strengthen the findings.

Second, the purposeful sampling technique utilized for the qualitative data collection was a result of researching articles from the LexisNexis database. The database is a collection of newspaper articles that go back several decades. Unfortunately, the only articles listed were of incidents with negative outcomes. It was stated by most of the interview participants that they felt media coverage had a negative impact on the issue and the way it was perceived by the community at large. It would be beneficial for future research to employ a different sampling technique in order to learn the names of principals that had dealt with the team nickname issue without media coverage.

Third, the survey population was a self-selected sample. Hence, not all school divisions are represented in the findings. Three school divisions, which included 22 high school principals, refused to participate. It would be beneficial for future research to be able to include a representation of findings that included all school divisions. Just as a letter of endorsement is purported to increase survey response rates (Dillman,2000), a letter of endorsement from the Virginia School Superintendent could

possibly pave the way for opening the doors that were closed for this research project.

Fourth, this research was cross-sectional in nature. It resulted in findings from one point in time. Future researchers may wish to consider a study with a longitudinal design. A different research design that would allow observations to be made over time may address whether the team nicknames are an issue that warrants further research of if the offensiveness of them is possibly a trend or not at the top of the priority list for most public school principals. Principal "A" made the observation during his interview, that after the team mascot issue, he was "now dealing with gangs, guns, drugs, murder, and the Middle East war. You really need to put things in perspective." However, Principal "G" commented that "People have decades of passion behind them versus people with centuries of passion behind them. This needs to be looked at."

While the limitations of the current research points the way for future research considerations, there are also a number of recommendations that are theoretical for future research consideration. First, additional emphasis on the demographic information provided by the respondents could prove beneficial. For example, the majority of the respondents in the current study were tenured principals. As the number of school principals reaching retirement age

increases, it would be beneficial to learn if the organizational context remains the same or changes with the addition of principals new to the position. Walker & Qian (2006) report that as new members join an organization, their replacements will have a different culture to navigate. Also another point concerning a longitudinal study relates to a point made by Principal "A". He stated: *"45 years of tradition, you can change a school environment or culture totally in 6 years. A student starts in 9th grade and becomes a senior and is gone, actually 4 or 5 years. I was there 11 years; 6 years into my tenure and it (the mascot) is a non-issue. The new students didn't even know who (mascot) was."*

Another demographic variable to consider would be marital status of the participants. This is particularly relevant considering Principal "C's" experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. This particular principal dealt with some very negative constituents and personal threats and intimidation toward himself and his family. Principal "C" has kept the documentation of his experiences in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue. He showed this researcher a variety of examples of hate mail that was sent to either himself or his family.

The examples were quite disturbing and could certainly be viewed as deterrents for issue selling.

A second area to consider for future theoretical recommendations involves a more detailed exploration of the relationship between the supervisor and the employee. Leader-member exchange theory suggests supervisors develop varying degrees of social exchange relationships with different members. An employee with a high leader-member exchange relationship is defined as being part of the in-group while a low leader-member exchange relationship signifies being part of the out-group. Xu & Huang (2010) found that issue selling is more salient between the in and out groups. It would be beneficial to learn what impact the in-group versus out-group approach would have on employees in a public school system and their willingness to sell an issue.

Recommendations for Public Policy and Administration

This study provides a number of issues for policy consideration. These issues include the principals' perceptions concerning raising a controversial issue and how those controversial issues are handled at the school division level. It is important that these areas be investigated in order to develop programs for future issues.

While most principals indicated their support in dealing with the objectionable team nickname issue, it remains important that stereotypes are dealt with in the school system. Principal "G" stated: *"While a building principal may have a passion about an issue, one way or the other, a principal must be able to represent multiple sides of an issue and represent multiple parts of the community"*.

The issue of stereotypes in schools for team nicknames is one that needs to be reviewed continually as society changes and as people determine what is and is not acceptable (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). As one principal remarked, "Public institutions represent every voice and it must be done in a fair and balanced way." A future recommendation would be to ensure nicknames for future schools are closely scrutinized for acceptability. It is recommended a selection guideline be developed.

The way a controversial issue is handled is critical. Several principals mentioned this as an area of concern. Principal "E" and Principal "F" summed the handling of the issue as follows: *"I think the way it was handled was wrong. We are an educational institution; we should have taught this and it was not the way it happened. It could have been a really good opportunity. It could have been part of the*

curriculum about not having stereotypes. It would have provided a deeper understanding of why it's an issue. The teaching moment and a good opportunity were missed by having it forced upon us." And "When people are too close to a situation, it is not academic. But then again most policy decisions are not. It would be nice if they could be made in isolation. They are frequently made in the context and the heat of the moment."

A plan needs to be in place in every school division on how to handle controversial issues and how to contain them. Principal "A" felt he was trained (by his background) to handle the enormity of the team nickname issue. However, he had reservations that all principals had the same kind of skills in dealing with such emotions, *"The emotional aspect of this was to be expected. There were no resources or processes in place to deal with the emotional aftermath created because of this decision."*

It is crucial that all voices are heard and considered. It is also important that recommendations for future policy include all constituents to help alleviate the feeling of being left out and not considered in the decision making process. Principal "A" concludes by saying: *"After many focus groups, the students learned to agree to disagree."*

They learned to respect each others differences, and actually found out they liked each other. None of this could have happened had we not gotten through the emotions so the healing could take place."

Conclusion

This journey began by attending a pro-football game where groups of people were protesting the team's nickname. The initial questioning of why someone would protest a nickname led to this research. The resulting study has identified several types of team nicknames that can be viewed as objectionable and offensive to some. Several variables were identified to describe the factors that influence the willingness of school principals to raise or sell the objectionable team nickname issue to their school division administration.

The findings in this study are consistent with previous research even though this study used a population whose organizational culture is known to be hierarchical and heavily bureaucratic in structure. Several of the findings of this research offer the opportunity to develop plans designed to increase the school principal's willingness to sell a controversial issue in the future. The findings in this research also indicate that team nicknames can be

considered to be controversial to some and is a complex issue.

These findings should help public policy practitioners identify various ways in dealing with this complex issue as well as preparing for future confrontations with appropriate responses, community education, training for school personnel, and resource allocation. This study provided evidence that organizations need to provide a culture where controversial issues can be "sold".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF AMERICAN INDIAN NICKNAME & MASCOT CHANGES

TIMELINE OF AMERICAN INDIAN NICKNAME & MASCOT CHANGES

- 1969 Dartmouth College (NH) changes from the Indians to Big Green.
- 1971 Marquette University (WI) abolishes Willie Wampum mascot.
Mankato State College (MN) drops Indian caricature mascot.
- 1972 Stanford University (CA) changes from the Indians to Cardinal and drops Prince Lightfoot mascot.
Dickinson State University (ND) changes from Savages to Blue Hawks.
- 1973 University of Oklahoma (OK) drops Little Red mascot.
Eastern Washington University (WA) changes from the Savages to the Eagles.
- 1978 Syracuse University (NY) drops Saltine Warrior mascot.
- 1980 Southern Oregon University (OR) drops Red Raider motif.
- 1987 St. John's University (NY) drops Indian caricature logo and mascot.
- 1988 Siena College (NY) changes from Indians to Saints.
Saint Mary's College (MN) changes from Red Men to Cardinals.
- 1989 Montclair State University (NJ) drops Indians nickname and mascot.
Bradley University (IL) drops mascot and replaces Indian caricature logo.
- 1991 Eastern Michigan University (MI) changes from Hurons to Eagles on recommendation of a state civil rights commission.
- 1992 Naperville Central High School (IL) drops nickname Redskins.
Simpson College (IA) changes from Redmen to Storm.
- 1993 Arkansas State University (AR) drops Running Joe mascot.
Arvada High School (CO) changes from Redskins to Reds.
University of Wisconsin (WI) passes a resolution refusing to play non-conference games against teams with Indian nicknames.
Bradley University (IL) adopts Bobcats mascot and drops all Indian references in its logo, but keeps the nickname Braves.
- 1994 University of Iowa (IA) bans the University of Illinois mascot, Chief Illiniwek, and announces it will not schedule games with teams with Indian mascots.
Juanita College (PA) changes from the Indians to Eagles.

- Marquette University (WI) changes from Warriors to Golden Eagles.
 St. John's University (NY) changes from Redmen to Red Storm.
 University of Southern Colorado (CO) drops Indian mascot after 57 years.
 Montclair State University (NJ) changes from Indians to Red Hawks.
- 1996 Newton High School (CN) announces they will drop their Indian mascot.
 University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (TN) drops mascot Chief Moccannooga.
 Miami University (OH) votes to drop nickname Redskins after 68 years.
- 1997 Marist High School (IL) changed from Redskins to Redhawks.
- 1998 Yakima Valley Community College (WA) drops Indian nickname.
 Federal judge in Los Angeles upholds district policy banning Indian mascots at all of its schools.
 Southern Nazarene University (OK) changes from Redskins to Crimson Storm. *According to the school's president, "with increased attention in the country to do it, we just did not want to be the last to make a change, and I feel eventually most schools with that kind of mascot or nickname will do".*
- 1999 Indiana University of Pennsylvania announces it will retain nickname Indians, but changes mascot to a black bear.
 Erwin High School (NC) discontinues calling girl's teams Squaws, but retains Warriors nickname.
 Wisconsin schools have eliminated Indian mascots or nicknames in 25 schools since 1991, 43 remain.
 Seattle University (WA) changes from Chieftains to Redhawks and drops its Indian head logo.
- 2000 Scarborough High School (MA) drops nickname Redskins.
 Niles West High School (IL) drops nickname Indians.
- 2001 Southwestern College (CA) changes mascot from Apache to Jaguar.
 Woonsocket High School (SD) votes to drop Redmen nickname and mascot.
 San Diego State University (CA) drops Montey Montezuma mascot.
 Parsippany High School (NJ) changes from Redskins to Redhawks.
 Saranac Lake High School (NY) changes from Redskins to Red Storm.
 Ball-Chatham School Board (IL) votes to get rid of Indian mascots and nicknames in district schools.
 Chatham Glenwood High School (IL) changes from Redskins to Titans.
Glenwood Junior High School are no longer known as the Braves.
 West Seattle High School (WA) drops nickname Indians.
 Georgetown High School (SC) drops Waccamaw Warriors symbol.
 Maryland State School Board passes resolution opposing Indian mascots.
 Bloomington High School (IL) drops Red Raiders nickname.

- Colgate University (NY) drops word Red from Red Raiders nickname.
 Montgomery County School Board (MD) bans Indian mascots, logos, and nicknames throughout the school system.
 Canastota High School (NY) drops Indian mascot.
- 2002 Milford High School (MI) drops Redskins.
- 2004 Ottawa Hills High School (MI) drops Indian mascot.
 Rice Memorial High School (VT) retires “Little Indian” mascot.
 Southeast Missouri State University (MO) changes from Indians to Redhawks.
- 2005 Old Town High School (ME) drops Indian nickname.
 Carthage College changes from Redmen to Red Men *and NCAA removes them from the banned list.*
 Midwestern State University (TX) changes from Indians to Mustangs *and NCAA removes them from the banned list.*
- 2006 West Georgia University (GA) changes from Braves to Wolves.
 Southeastern Oklahoma State University (OK) changes from Savages to Savage Storm.
 Chowan College (NC) drops Braves nickname and mascot.
 Muscatine Community College (IA) drops Indians nickname and mascot.
 Kelseyville High School (CA) drops Indians nickname.
 Mountain Vista Middle School (CA) drops Braves nickname.
 University of Louisiana-Monroe (LA) changes from Indians to Warhawks *after being 1 of 18 colleges and universities on the NCAA list* References to the campus as “the Reservation” also stopped.
 College of William & Mary (VA) announces it will remove two feathers from its logo to comply with NCAA rule.
 Tomah School District (WI) drops all Indian nicknames, mascots, and logos.
- 2007 Salesian High School (CA) changes from Chieftains to Pride.
 University of Illinois (IL) Board of Trustees passes a resolution officially eliminating Chief Illiniwek, discontinuing the use of its Chief head logo, regalia, and the names “Chief Illiniwek” and “Chief”.
- 2010 University of Mississippi adopts Rebel Bear as the school mascot after retiring Colonel Reb several years earlier.

Author: Jay Rosenstein, Associate Professor, University of Illinois Source:
http://www.inwhosehonor.com/documents/mascot_changes.html (03/22/07).

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL

VCU Memo

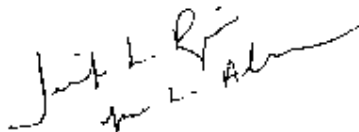
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Subjects Protection
BioTech.org Research Park
BioTech Ctr., 800 E. Leigh Street, #114
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, Virginia 23298-0568
(804) 828-3992
(804) 827-1448 (fax)

DATE: August 26, 2010

TO: Sarah Jane Bombaker, PhD
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Box 842028

FROM: Lisa M. Abrams, PhD
Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
Box 980568



RE: VCU IRB #: H.M13134
Title: Objectionable Team Nicknames: Determining the Likelihood of Selling the Issue of banning them in Virginia High Schools

On August 26, 2010, the following research study was approved by expedited review according to 45 CFR 46.110 Category 7. The approval reflects the revisions received in the Office of Research Subjects Protection on August 20, 2010. This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel.

RESEARCH APPLICATION/PROPOSAL: None

PROTOCOL (Research Plan): Objectionable Team Nicknames: Determining the Likelihood of Selling the Issue of banning them in Virginia High Schools, received 8/20/10, version date 8/18/10

- Interview Guide - Personal Interviews, received 8/6/10, version date 7/19/10
- A Survey on Organizational Issue-Selling in Virginia Public High Schools, received 8/6/10, version date 7/19/10

CONSENT/ASSENT (attached):

- Research Subject Information and Consent form, received 8/19/10, version date 8/18/10, 4 pages
- Survey Participant Cover Letter, received 8/20/10, version date 8/18/10, 2 pages
- Waiver of Documentation of Consent for Online Survey: One of the conditions set forth in 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2), for waiver of documentation of consent has been met and the IRB Panel has waived documentation of consent.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS: None

This approval expires on July 31, 2011. Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled review.

(Continued...)

APPENDIX C

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Objectionable team nicknames: Determining the likelihood of selling the issue of banning them in Virginia high schools

VCU IRB NO.: HM 13134 (Revised 08/18/10)

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study staff to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to identify and understand under what conditions public high school principles are more or less willing to bring the issue of objectionable team nicknames to the attention of their district administration.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

The study will consist of interviews with individuals that have dealt with the issue of objectionable team nicknames at the high school level in the past. You will be asked questions pertaining to the factors that determine if an individual is willing to raise the issue objectionable team nicknames to their superior or district administration. The information obtained will be used to assess the factors that affect the issue-selling process.

The interviews will be tape recorded so no important points are missed, but no names will be recorded on the tape. Your participation in the interview will last approximately one-half hour.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks to participating. Participants will be specifically identified and nature of the questions does not require the participants to divulge information that may be damaging to them. Your employment status will in no way be affected by your participation or nonparticipation in the study.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS

You will not get any direct benefit from participating in this study. Your employment status is in no way affected by either your participation or nonparticipation in this research study. The findings may help to understand what factors affect an individual's willingness to raise issues with their supervisors.

COSTS

There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of notes and recordings and audiotapes of interviews. Data is being collected only for research purposes. Interviews will be tape-recorded, but only the researcher will hear the tapes. Interviews will be transcribed into text files that will not include any identifying information. At the beginning of the interview session, all members will be asked to use initials only so that no names are recorded. The tapes and the notes will be stored in a locked cabinet. After the information from the tapes is typed, the tapes will be destroyed.

During the interview, the researcher will not record the identity of any of the participants. Discussions will not be recorded in a way that connects comments to specific individuals.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University.

What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but neither your name nor your place of employment will ever be used in these presentations or papers.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

Your participation in this study may be stopped at any time by the study staff without your consent. The reasons might include:

- the study staff thinks it necessary for your health or safety;
- you have not followed study instructions;
- the sponsor has stopped the study; or
- administrative reasons require your withdrawal.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

The only alternative means for participation in this study is not to participate.

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

Sarah Jane Brubaker, Ph.D.

Virginia Commonwealth University

919 W. Franklin Street Telephone: (804) 827-2400

Richmond, VA 23284

sbrubaker@vcu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research

Virginia Commonwealth University

800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113

P.O. Box 980568

Richmond, VA 23298

Telephone: 804-827-2157

You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm>.

CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.

Participant name printed

Participant signature

Date

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent

Discussion / Witness ³

(Printed)

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent

Date

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF SUPPORT



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

804.355.2777
(fax) 804.355.4262

www.vapprincipals.org

The Professional Association of Middle and High School Administrators

August 10, 2010

Dear High School Principal:

I write to introduce you to Pamela Taylor, a doctoral student in the Public Policy and Public Administration program at Virginia Commonwealth University. I have known Pam for over five years and ask for your assistance in a study that is of significant interest to VASSP that focuses on the “raising or selling of issues” in the work environment.

To fulfill her doctoral requirements, Pam is investigating objectionable team nicknames in public high schools and the extent to which principals would be willing to raise or sell the issue to their school district administration. The banning of objectionable American Indian team nicknames and mascots by the National Collegiate Athletic Association in sports programs at the college and university level is likely to ensure the same discussions will happen at the high school level as well. This is a topic that needs to be dealt with openly and proactively.

Pam is doing a web-based survey that should not take more than 15 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation would be gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely,

Randy D. Barrack, Ed.D., Ph.D.

Executive Director

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

I am interested in whether school principals feel comfortable communicating with their superiors and understanding the circumstances that make them feel more or less comfortable doing so. I am particularly interested in the topic of objectionable team nicknames used in high schools.

In this interview, I would like to learn about what you think about these issues in general, as well as a few questions about your own experiences with speaking up or remaining silent. Please feel free to share anything, I am not looking for anything in particular and there are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in different people's experiences and points of views. All information will be kept confidential.

1. What is the title of the person to whom you report?
2. Do you feel generally comfortable speaking to your (title) about problems/issues that concern you at work?
3. Have you ever felt that you could not openly raise an issue of concern to your (title)?
4. Would you say there are general classes or types of issues that you cannot raise with your (title)?
5. What are those issues?
6. [If yes to #4]
 - A. What do you believe inhibits you from speaking up about those types of issues or concerns?
 - B. How often do you find yourself in this situation?
7. Can you think of a specific instance in your current job where you have felt you could not or should not speak openly or honestly about a certain issue?
 - A. Tell me about it. What was the issue?

- B. What made you feel that you could not speak about it?
 - C. What do you think would have happened if you expressed your concerns?
8. There are some who would define some team nicknames as objectionable, for example the use of American Indian, sexist, Satanic, or Southern Heritage nicknames or mascots; do you feel this is one of those issues that you could not speak openly or honestly to your (title)?
9. [If yes to #8],
- A. What do you believe inhibits(ed) you from speaking up about objectionable team nicknames?
 - B. Do you think your colleagues share this feeling of unease?
10. [If no to #8],
- A. What do you think enabled you to speak up about the issue?
 - B. What made it possible?
11. Are you aware of anyone else that may have dealt with the objectionable team nickname issue at their school?

APPENDIX F

SURVEY

Issue-Selling and Team Nicknames Survey

1. What is your sex?

Male _____

Female _____

2. What is your age?

21-30 _____

31-40 _____

41-50 _____

Over 60 _____

3. What is your racial/ethnic background?

White, non-Hispanic _____

Black, non-Hispanic _____

Hispanic _____

Other _____

4. With which religion do you most identify?

Buddhism _____

Christianity _____

Hinduism _____

Islam _____

Judaism _____

Other _____

None _____

5. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "very religious" and 5 "not being religious at all", how religious do you consider yourself?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Which best describes your status at your current school:

Tenured principal _____
 Interim principal _____
 Temporary principal _____
 Other _____

7. Including this year, how long have you been a principal in your current school?

1 year or less _____
 2-5 years _____
 6-10 years _____
 More than 10 years _____

8. Including this year, how long have been employed in your current school division?

1 year or less _____
 2-5 years _____
 6-10 years _____
 More than 10 years _____

9. Is the team nickname at your current school one that you would consider as being sensitive or offensive to others?

Yes _____
 No _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. My school division administration takes my goals and values into account when making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Help is available from my school division administration when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5

12. My school division administration really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My school division administration is willing to extend him/herself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Even if I did the best job possible, school division administration would fail to notice.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My school division administration cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My school division administration shows very little concern for me. ®	1	2	3	4	5
17. My school division administration cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The school division administration in my school division give good ideas serious attention.	1	2	3	4	5
19. School division administration is interested in ideas and suggestions from people at my level in my school district.	1	2	3	4	5
20. When suggestions are made to school division administration, they receive fair evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5
21. School division administration takes action on recommendations made from people at my level in my school division.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel free to make recommendations to my school division administration to change existing practices.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Good ideas do not get communicated upward because my school division administration is not very approachable. ®	1	2	3	4	5
24. Principals in my school division are typically willing to raise issues important to them to their division administration.	1	2	3	4	5
25. In my school division, controversial issues are kept under the table. ®	1	2	3	4	5
26. Principals seldom raise controversial issues in my school division. ®	1	2	3	4	5

27. I am confident that I could raise/sell the issue of banning the use of objectionable (unacceptable or offensive) team nicknames successfully to my school division administration if it was an issue at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I believe I could get the critical decision makers in my school division to "buy" banning the use of objectionable team nicknames in our school division if it was an issue.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am confident that I could get the critical decision makers in my school division to pay attention to the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nicknames.	1	2	3	4	5
30. If I were to raise/sell the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nickname; other principals and administrators within my school division would think less of me.	1	2	3	4	5
31. If I were to raise/sell the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nicknames; my image within my school division would be enhanced.	1	2	3	4	5
32. The way things are set up in my school division, it would take a lot of effort to get feedback from others.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I would be uncomfortable asking my school district administrator how he/she evaluates my behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I feel that I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others in my position. ®	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am frequently bothered by my own feelings of inferiority.	1	2	3	4	5

36. How much time have you or would you be willing to spend to try to raise/sell the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nicknames to your school division administration?

Several hours _____

A day _____

A week _____

As long as it takes _____

None at all _____

37. What, if anything, would you be willing to do or have you done previously to try to raise/sell the issue of banning the use of objectionable team nicknames in public schools to your school division administration?

Research the issue _____

Discuss with other principals _____

Make an appointment to discuss with supervisor _____

Write a proposal/action plan _____

Nothing _____

38. In the past 12 months, please rate your involvement with the issue of banning objectionable team nicknames in public schools.

Attended a meeting concerning this issue _____

Discussed this issue with a colleague _____

Signed a petition _____

Joined a committee _____

Nothing _____

39. How important is the issue of objectionable team nicknames to you?

Very important	_____
Important	_____
Don't know	_____
Not important	_____

40. With 1 being very objectionable and 5 being not objectionable at all, please rank each of the team nicknames listed.

Waves	_____
Yellow Devils	_____
Redskins	_____
Yanks	_____
Bulls	_____

41. Who, if anyone, has discussed the issue of objectionable team nicknames in public schools with you? Please check as many that may apply.

Student	_____
Parent	_____
Teacher	_____
Staff member	_____
Colleague	_____
Professional Organization	_____
Other	_____
No one has discussed this issue with me.	_____

42. If anyone has discussed the issue of objectionable team nicknames in public schools with you, when was the issue last raised?

During this school year _____

1-3 years ago _____

4-6 years ago _____

More than 7 years ago _____

43. What is your current school's team nickname? _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and provide your valuable input.
Please feel free to add any comments.

(@=Reverse scored)

APPENDIX G

SURVEY PARTICIPANT COVER LETTER

Survey Participant Cover Letter

Dear _____:

I am writing to ask you to participate in a study that focuses on the raising or selling of issues in the work environment. Issue selling is defined as “calling the organization’s attention to key trends, developments, and events that have implications for organizational performance” (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Issue selling happens early in the process of strategic decision-making and is paramount to understanding change and innovation in organizations that are constantly changing. The sooner an organization knows about the “early warning signals” in their environments, the sooner they can respond.

The recent ruling from the National Collegiate Athletic Association that bans the use of team nicknames that can be viewed as objectionable or offensive in sports programs at the college and university level is one such issue. It can be assumed that such a banning at the collegiate level will eventually become a topic of discussion at the high school level.

As a doctoral student in the Public Policy and Administration Program at Virginia Commonwealth University, I am currently working on my dissertation. As part of the program requirement, the enclosed survey has been developed in order to gain a greater understanding of issue selling in public high schools, particularly an issue that can be interpreted by many as emotional and decisive such as objectionable team nicknames. I am contacting the public high school principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to gain input on this concept and to represent the views of public high school principals in general. For the survey to be helpful in advancing the existing knowledge of change in the workplace, it is important that you provide candid responses.

The web survey should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete and can be accessed using the following link (to be provided). Your responses will be seen only by me and will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Responses will be analyzed in aggregate through statistical relationships and will be released only as summaries in which no individual’s responses can be identified.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty or explanation. Your consent to participate will be through your completion of the survey and clicking on the “submit” button. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at ###-###-#### or via email at ptaylor@Averett.edu.

APPENDIX H
SECOND REMINDER EMAIL

Second Reminder Email

Dear High School Principal:

Last week I sent an email with an attachment from Dr. Randy Barrack of VASSP asking for your participation in my survey. The survey is being used as a data collection tool so that I may complete my dissertation research on high school team nicknames and issue selling. As far as I can tell, this research is unique and nothing like this has been done anywhere in the country, let alone Virginia.

If you have responded and completed my survey already, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I apologize for a duplicate email requesting help but since all responses are collected by an independent server (Survey Monkey), I am unable to see who has responded and who has not. All respondent identities, including email addresses, are kept completely anonymous and confidential by the server.

If you have not responded, would you please take a moment to reconsider and complete my survey for me? If I do not receive enough responses, I will not be able to complete this phase of my research design to finish my dissertation. This dissertation is the last of the requirements I must accomplish so that I may earn my Ph.D. I really, really could use your help and support.

I am available at ptaylor@averett.edu or can be reached at 804-270-6442 ext. 108 if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time. I have included the link to my survey for your convenience.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Pam Taylor

APPENDIX I

THIRD REMINDER EMAIL

Third Reminder Email

Dear High School Principal:

This will be my final request or reminder asking for your participation in my survey for my dissertation research. In the interest of time, I must close the survey on _____.

I wish to thank everyone who has participated. Your input is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the principals, although they must remain nameless, who took the time from their busy schedules to allow me to interview them for the qualitative portion of my dissertation research. Your input is also greatly appreciated. Every principal I requested an interview with agreed, for a 100% response rate.

Although I know I can never hit that great of a response rate for my survey, I sure would like to try. I would love to have the statistical proof to show my committee that Virginia high school principals are indeed, very supportive.

If you have not responded, would you please take a moment to reconsider your decision? It will only take 10-15 minutes to complete my survey. I have included the link to my survey for your convenience.
<http://surveymonkey.com>

If you do not feel comfortable answering a particular question, there will be no harm in deciding not to answer it. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have at ptaylor@averett.edu

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration.

VITA

Pamela L. Taylor was born on June 28, 1957, in Washington, D.C. and is an American citizen. She graduated from Denbigh High School, Newport News, Virginia in 1975. She earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from Averett College in 1996 and a Master of Business Administration from Averett College in 1999. She is currently employed as Faculty Coordinator and Adjunct Instructor at Averett University.